

The Richmond alarm; a plain and familiar discourse in the form of a dialogue between a father and his son; in three parts,

THE RICHMOND ALARM; A PLAIN AND FAMILIAR DISCOURSE IN THE FORM OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS SON;

IN THREE PARTS:

I. Containing introduction, with many instructive hints and observations upon many of the most remarkable occurrences, wonders and curiosities in history; with a short account of the four religions of the world, viz. Pagan, Jewish, Mahometan and Christian religion: and a brief account of the Greek church, Popish church, and Protestant church.

II. An account of the burning of the Theatre in Richmond, December 26, 1811; with observations upon the nature and effects of Stage Plays, Masquerades, Balls, Puppet Shows, Horse Races, and Gambling.

III. Reflections upon that conflagration; with a solemn application to people of every rank and character....humbly intended to reform our citizens, and to warn the youth of our country to avoid those sinful vanities by which not only the blooming days of their youth are mispent, but also they are misled into many wretched vices and miseries of this world, and everlasting destruction in the world to come.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A NUMBER OF PIOUS PERSONS, BY AN INDEPENDENT MINISTER, Who in the course of his ministry upwards of thirty years, took notice of many of the devices and snares of the great enemy of our souls to ensnare

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and entice the fallen race of Adam from embracing the free salvation through Jesus our blessed Redeemer.

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DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO WIT:

Seal Be it remembered, That on the seventh day of April, in the thirty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1814, John Bioren, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

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In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned....And also to the act, entitled, “An act supplementary to an act entitled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,” and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL, *Clerk of the District of Pennsylvania*

TO THE READER.

This dialogue might be entertaining, were it not levelled against the vanities and infidelity of the age, and against the refuge of lies of carnal security. To remove the prejudice which may arise against it?n that account; I desire the reader to read it over before he condemns it, and that, if possible, under the same impressions that I wrote it: as in sight of death, judgment, and eternity. If some of my readers will receive no benefit from it, I expect they will excuse my freedom, on account of my being their well wisher, desiring their present and future happiness. If either of these considerations will not do, I desire my readers to bear with, till we all appear in the great session, before the bar of the supreme judge, and that will be in a short time, where every individual will have his cause tried with the strictest justice and equity. This world and the fashion thereof is passing away; time shall

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be swallowed up by an endless eternity. Mr. Burnham upon his death bed, although he was full of peace and joy as he could hold, yet he was under weighty impressions and was greatly concerned for the salvation of others, and said, O that we were sensibly touched with the weight of eternal things! Eternal things! O the weight of eternal things! Another person I have read the account of, being upon his death bed, under an awful sense iv of his approaching misery, cried with a doleful voice, O eternity, eternity, how shall I look into thy endless ocean! A gentlewoman of great fortune, in Britain, understood that one of her maid servants used to read after all had gone to bed, had the curiosity, one night to approach silently behind the back of her servant, and looking over her shoulder to see what book she had, the first word her eyes fixed upon, was eternity; which word, by the blessing of God, brought her to a consideration of her spiritual state. I am inclined to think that my impartial readers may perceive, that though I am fallible, yet I am sincere. Then, not by infallibility (a pretension to which, I abhor in every individual and party) but by sincerity, my dear readers I wish to have access to your minds, to bring you to consider the subjects I have laid before you, and I desire you to consider the danger of following the vanities of this wicked world at the expense of forfeiting the salvation of your souls, and the danger of trusting in false religion, or trusting in a speculative knowledge and forms of true religion. Though a correct knowledge and proper form of religion are very good and needful, yet they will not do without the power of religion in the inward man, any more than a body will do, in being fit for action without life. Therefore, it is a matter of great importance, not only to have religion, but to have true religion, which in the main is an affectionate and firm connection of the soul with God, taking his divine revealed will in his word to be his rule, with submission to his sovereign will in the dispensation of iris providence. I may say that this religion is the highest improvement of the human mind, the brightest ornament of the rational v part, and the best and surest guide of human life. And with the learned Dr. Moore I may say, that the religion of Jesus is all spiritual and divine, while all other religions savour of the animal life and human invention; and with Solomon the wisest of all men, say that all the ways of this religion *are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Prov 3. 17.

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I thought once to lay aside this my address to the public, on the subject of the burning of the theatre at Richmond, when I understood there were some sermons and pamphlets already printed on the occasion; but as I did not see any of them, I thought this might be the case with a great many others, and considering that line upon line is necessary, and that old impressions of the dreadful event should be renewed, made me think it my duty to cast into the treasury my unworthy mite, which is my first service from the press in this country, but perhaps not the last, if this shall appear to be acceptable and beneficial to some of my fellow creatures. Farewell.

THE AUTHOR.

April 10th, 1813. A 2

RICHMOND ALARM.

PART I.

Father. ARE you not well? my son, you look more serious than usual.

Son. Yes, father, I am well, but very much troubled in my mind by the dreadful news of the burning of the theatre in Richmond, with a great many of our respectable citizens in it, consumed to ashes on the 26th of this instant, as it appears in the *American Standard*: please to read it father!!!

F. My dear son this is a woeful account, and the consideration of so many going suddenly to eternity, should teach us to consider our latter end, that our hearts may be applied to wisdom, (Deut. 32. 29.) The comforts and happiness of this world, are very uncertain: our dearest friends and relations may be snatched from us very unexpectedly.

S. Dear father, I thought much of those who were consumed in the flames, and of those who so narrowly escaped, and were made the trembling spectators of the dreadful scene.

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F. Did you not tremble yourself, my son, for fear that such a woeful calamity was a sign of the displeasure of the Almighty against plays and gambling?

S. Why father, are you against such amusements?

F. Yes, I am, because I have no doubt but that they are offensive to God.

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S. Why father, do you think all who go to play houses are wicked people?

F. No; I am not of that opinion neither, because some may go there once or twice, to see for their own satisfaction, what is carried on in such places; others may go there sometimes to please their friends, &c.; but the safest way is to avoid them entirely.

S. That may be; but I did not think the conflagration a sign of the displeasure of God against plays; but I thought much of the victims who perished and of their friends and relations who survived, who I think were very unhappy.

F. Unhappy indeed; we are unhappy at the best (how much more unhappy in calamity) without an interest in him that is a friend that loveth at all times, and in a brother born for adversity. Prov. 17. 17.

S. Who is that father; is it possible to find such a friend and brother?

F. Aye; he is Jesus Christ; he can save both body and soul; and though the body may be consumed by fire, be bruised, crushed and mangled in pieces, he will take care of the soul to bring it to glory, and will watch also over the body in the grave, till the glorious morning of the resurrection, when the soul and body shall be reunited to a mutual enjoyment of unspeakable joy forever.

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S. What do you say father? do you think none shall be happy, at the resurrection of the dead, but those who have an interest in Jesus; for my part I have thought but little of these things?

F. We have no warrant that any shall be happy without this, for he is the way, the truth, and the life, John 14. 7. 8 and he that hath the Son, hath life, 8 and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life, 1 John, 5. 12. I hope my son you will think more of Jesus Christ, and of the resurrection of our bodies.

S. Dear father, I know not what to say; I have thought but little of such things, and it appears that most all our neighbours are as much unconcerned as I am.

F. It is a woeful truth that light came into the world, and men loved darkness more than light because their deeds were evil, John 3. 19.

S. I have nothing to say against that father; but after all, I cannot see much harm in playhouses, gambling, &c.; and I have heard some wiser and more knowing than myself say, that there are none against such amusements, but ignorant, fanatic and enthusiastic persons.

F. Then my son, it is likely you look upon me as one of those fanatic persons, or one ignorant of the customs and manners of the world.

S. Yes; that is my opinion of you and others of the same stamp.

F. Then I can hardly tell how to proceed; I thought to make some observations upon the nature and effects of stage plays, gambling, and other vanities of the same kind, but I now see that I must first endeavour to remove that prejudice upon your mind against me and all of my stamp: will you be willing to listen attentively to what I may say concerning the numerous customs and manners of the world, by which I may partly defend myself from the charge of ignorance and fanaticism, but shall also, perhaps, add a little to your

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knowledge, though you, like other young people, may think after you get to know a little, you know the whole.

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S. Yes father; I am very willing to listen to and regard your instructions.

F. I am very glad to find that you are ready to pay attention to what I am going to tell you; but you must be satisfied with very short hints, for time and circumstances will not allow me to dwell long upon any of these subjects; remember that half a word is sufficient to the wise, and the understanding heart will see much by small rays of light. Come then, I'll ask you some questions; do you know how many parts there are in the globe or the world?

S. I bare heard some talking of the new and old world; the new this side, and the old the other side of the Atlantic ocean.

F. It is true, the old world is on the other side of the Atlantic ocean, which contains three parts, Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is called the old world, because there our first parents, and all creatures on the globe had their first existence; and there every thing remarkable in church and state was transacted and recorded, before the new world was discovered. The fourth part of the world contains North and South America, and is called the new world because newly discovered.

S. When and by whom in the old was the new world at first discovered.

F. The first discovery of the new world, upon authentic record, was made in the year A. D. 1492, by Christopher Columbus, and it has been unjustly called America, after one Americus, who Came over some years after, in company with one Ojede from Spain, in search for gold.

S. In pursuit of gold, father! why then do the people of America complain for want of money, 10 if those persons came over from Spain in search of gold?

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F. You should understand that America to the North of the Gulf of Mexico is called North America, and southward, South America, and it was from South America, the inhabitants of the old world enriched themselves with gold; for in South America, especially in the parts called Peru and Chili, there was an immense quantity of gold mine.

S. I suppose the Spaniards paid the old inhabitants for the gold and other treasures gotten from there.

F. Only some trifling toys at first, and that only to get the old inhabitants to discover and collect it; then they took possession of the country and used the old inhabitants in the most horrid manner.

S. Why, did they kill them!

F. Yes; they tormented them shockingly and killed them. One Fernando Cortez besieged the city of Mexico, which was about nine miles in circumference; the great Indian emperor Montezuma surrendered, and opened the gate of the city to him in the year 1519; but when the inhabitants saw the cruelty of the Spaniards, that they imprisoned their sovereign and spoiled their city, they revolted and drove them out. Then Cortez, having his army reinforced from Spain, took Mexico and killed of the inhabitants not less than one hundred thousand: this was about the year 1521. The Spanish officers excused themselves in killing the Indians, and said it was no harm; for the Indians sacrificed men to their gods; but Bartholomew Cavas, bishop of Chiapa, who was in Mexico at that time, declared that the murderer Cortez and his fellow robbers, sacrificed more human lives 11 annually to their demon Avarice, than the Indians sacrificed to their gods in a hundred years. One Predrarius, another Spanish officer who reduced the large country Terra Firma to the crown of Spain, in the year 1514. This wicked governor ravaged this large country, full of inhabitants, which is about fifteen hundred miles long, and seven hundred wide, governed by several rich princes, possessing more gold than any king upon earth. Predrarius and his fellow robbers destroyed of the inhabitants of this country, not less than eight hundred

thousand, and invented many ways to torment them, in order to make them confess where they had their gold, pearls, &c. They tormented them by straining and burning their bodies, inch by inch; and those whom they spared chose rather to die than live under the Spanish government. In other parts of this large Indian country, they destroyed no less than four millions and almost all their chiefs were tormented to make them confess where they had their gold. One of their highest chiefs being tormented for some months, that he might be made to confess where he had his gold and emeralds, promised his tormentors a house full of gold if they would quit tormenting him. To make good his promise, he sent to every part of his dominions for gold, and collected a wonderful quantity of it, but because he could not fill the house, he was tormented again, to make him get more, which he could not; and after all his exertions to satisfy their thirst for gold, he died at last under their cruel hands. It was common to cut off the hands and noses of men and women and to cast them to the dogs in sport, and to keep a number of hounds to hunt them; and often a Spaniard would lend a piece of an Indian to another to feed his dogs.

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S. Shocking and cruel was the treatment if true!

F. It seems to be too true, for it was testified upon oath by several witnesses before the royal court of Spain. The Spanish officers and commanders who went to take possession of this large country, could not agree among themselves, with regard to their respective claims, and applying to the Spanish court for redress, and by informing upon each other, these cruelties were brought to light.

S. I tremble at the dreadful account.

F. 'Tis dreadful indeed, but it shall be more dreadful to the tormentors at the tremendous day of judgment, when those poor Indians shall rise up in judgment against them, and against those who enjoy, as we do, a country enriched and crowned with liberty, plenty

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and peace, and have wasted their precious time in playhouses, horse-races, tipling-houses, and at card-tables.

S. Aye, I see father that your aim is ever against them!

F. Yes; I am my son, and I wish to keep you in remembrance that I am so; it makes my soul tremble to see this part of the new world going headlong to temporal and eternal destruction, along the same wicked paths with the old world. I wish I could blow the trumpet loud enough to awake the careless to a sense of their danger.

S. As it has pleased you to give some account of this new world, I would thank you if you will please to tell me how it was peopled at first.

F. That is out of my power; this has puzzled the most learned historians. This new world might be peopled from the northeast of Asia and from the northwest of Europe, as there are but narrow 13 straits of water between them, and perhaps the continents were connected till separated by some violent earthquakes. It might also be peopled by accidents; some vessels may have lost their coasts and been driven by the wind; and by some rash adventurers, as Madoc Ap Owen, who sailed from Wales about eight or nine hundred years ago. For my own part, I am inclined to think all the earth was one continent, till the time of Peleg, which name might have been given him by the spirit of prophecy, because that in his days the earth was divided, Gen. 10.25. Likely when all the inhabitants of the earth were of one language, and gradually moving towards the plain of Shinar, and perhaps by Nimrod's persuasion agreed to erect a tower of great height, called Babel; the Almighty, to punish their rebellious pride, confounded their language, and so divided and dispersed them on the earth. But again, it is likely, that some time before Peleg's death, not only the inhabitants of the earth were divided, but also the earth itself was divided by a terrible earthquake; and the great commotions of the elements, made some parts of the dry ground an ocean, and some parts of the ocean dry ground, and this was done to punish the wickedness of mankind at that time when it happened; but afterward, it Was

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ordered by the Almighty and wise Sovereign of the Universe, that the large branches and arms of water which divided the earth or the different countries on the earth, answered the important end of trade and commerce.

S. I never heard before that the earth itself was divided in the days of Peleg, by large branches of water. B

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F. It is my opinion that there has been such a division of the earth, and now if America was joined to the old world before this division took place, it was easy for the inhabitants of the old world to emigrate to this country or to any island now in the ocean. The words, "in his days the earth was divided," are but a very short hint of the history of the division of the earth, as it was immaterial to the happiness of mankind, else it had been recorded at large, and this should make us thankful to the Almighty, that he has not concealed any thing from us which belongs to our real happiness.

S. I see you have some knowledge of the world and now I wish to hear more concerning it, I wish to hear something of its wonders and curiosities.

F. I might say much of China in Asia, which kingdom is said to be founded by Noah, when he moved eastward from Nimrod and his comrades; how industrious and ingenious these people are, how wonderfully they have increased. There is there an amazing stone wall of one thousand and five hundred miles in length, and cased with bricks; it is built between their country and Tartary, and it has stood one thousand eight hundred years and yet is but little decayed. The commodiousness and length of their canals is amazing and so is the construction of their bridges. The height of the wall of Pekin, their capital is surprizing, and it is broad enough for the centinels to go on horseback, and the bell in that city is of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds weight. Much might be said concerning the empire of the great Mogul, in India; the great and stupendous pyramids in Egypt in Africa; of Grand Cairo, with an old castle three miles in circumference, in which there is a well

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three 15 hundred feet deep, called Joseph's well; of Alexandria, with Pompey's marble monument, seventy feet high, and a labyrinth hewn out of stone, containing twelve palaces and three thousand chambers, half of which were under ground, and this structure had but one door; here they collected all their idols, and here the magistrates of the whole nation held their grand convention. In this country they had a wonderful art of embalming dead bodies, by which they were preserved for many centuries of years. I might describe the wonderful rivers Nile and Niger and many other rivers, as the Indus and Ganges in India, Tagus in Portugal, Danube in Germany, and De Laplata in South America, the largest river in the world. Also, I might give you a description of high mountains, as Abyssinia, the Alps, and the Carpathian hills, Plinlimon and Wythe in Wales, Peak in England, with the Andes in South America, the highest mountains in the world. I might also give you a description of the dreadful volcanoes or the burning mountains of *Ætna* in Sicily; *Xecla*, in the island of Iceland; *Strampoli* and *Vesuvius* in Naples. I do not mention the high mountains and large rivers in North America, for I expect you are not ignorant of them. I might give you an account of many terrible earthquakes, besides that at the death of our Saviour, said to be felt over the whole world and the rocks were rent in a preternatural manner. In Syria thirty thousand men perished by an earthquake in the year 1759; sixty thousand in Sicily in the year 1692; it overturned fifteen cities of the Lesser Asia in the year 19. Many mountains in *Æthiopia* sunk and disappeared. *Picus*, an exceeding high mountain, was swallowed up in an instant and a lake was left in its stead. A mountainous province of China sunk into an immense lake. Several mountains of the lofty Andes sunk into the earth one after another. A mountain in the northeast of Switzerland fell upon a town in the neighbourhood and quite buried it, in which two thousand people perished.

S. That was dreadful; I am afraid that such unexpected destruction may happen in our parts.

F. We know not what may happen; but we Should not be very fearful of such accidents, but we ought always to be ready for death and eternity, and we should fear to sin against God. God has a great treasure of fire and sulphur in the bowels of the earth, has all the

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elements at his command, and he may display his sovereign power and tremendous majesty whenever he pleases.

S. I wish to hear more of what has occurred in the world.

F. I might give you a large account of the four empires of the world, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome, and how the persecution of the Pagan Roman empire received a deadly wound, when Constantine the great came to the throne, and how that deadly wound was healed, when persecution took place under the Christian Roman empire. I might also describe many dreadful conflagrations, bloody wars, famines and plagues, which happened during the rise and fall of these empires, with many wonderful revolutions and new discoveries from early times till the present; but there are many excellent geographers and historians, who treat largely of these things, and wish you to read their works, for they will afford you more improvement and solid pleasure, than ever you can attain by attending 17 plays and gambling. What I have said, are but short hints in order to remove your prejudice and to stir up your mind to seek knowledge. And now I am inclined to give you some account of the customs and manners, and of the forms of religion of all the earth, that you may see that my opposition to plays and gambling is not the effect of some panic and enthusiastic temper, but is the effect of much consideration and deliberate enquiry. My opposition to plays and gambling has deeply resided in my bosom, during long researches, which I have made of the Pagan religion or idolatry in Asia, Europe, Africa and America; of the Jewish and Mahometan religion, and of the Christian religion, as held and practised by the Greek, Roman, and Protestant Churches.

S. I wish to hear something of the Pagan religion in Asia.

F. The old inhabitants of the great India, both sides of the river Ganges, have some notion that there is a high God, but they worship the elephant, the horse, and almost every living creature, and also mountains and rivers, as demigods and advocates for them in the most high God; especially the great rivers Ganges and Indus, making them an offering by

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throwing a great quantity of gold with many ceremonies into the water, and they count that man happy who dies on the bank of these rivers. Some of these Pagans have a notion that the soul, at death, goes out of sight as a spark flying out of the fire goes out in the air, and that a man may die nine times. They have temples and priests; their priests live on sacrifices and the alms of the people; they read prayers for the people and then throw them into the pot of offering or incense, B2 18 to be accepted and answered by the Gods. Their temples are mostly consecrated to some, who in old times, in their opinion, merited heaven, whom they worship, especially one Somona Codom, the monk of the wood. Likely the apostle St. Thomas preached the gospel in these parts, and hence they say, by some dark tradition, that some honourable Mary was the mother of this Somona Codom.

S. Are all the Pagans of one opinion in their religion.

F. No; there are many sects among them; the most noted are the Talaponians, who are of two sorts, Talaponians of the woods, and Talaponians of the city; these are very kind to strangers, believing that every country has its own particular gods, and particular way of worship. They have houses which might be called Pagan abbeys, where men and women live single, but none are admitted here, till advanced in age; they exercise much self-denial and pretend to make intercession for the people, and the people magnify them accordingly; they preach long in time of floods and new moons, admonishing the people to do justice and love mercy, and to consider the frailty of life and certainty of death, and enforce these duties by saying that the soul after death shall transmigrate into some animal, human body, or into trees to enjoy or suffer according to its desert in the first body; and say that after many transmigrations, if the soul be well purified and having passed through nine degrees of states, it shall be admitted into heaven far above the stars, but if not, it shall be sent down to the deep.

S. Have these no rules of morality?

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F. Yes; they have; they forbid telling lies, stealing, fornication and drunkenness; they forbid eating and sleeping to excess, dancing and playing with musical instruments; they forbid backbiting their neighbours, looking on a woman with a sinful desire, use words of double meaning, coveting another's possession, giving money upon usury and costly dress.

S. Is there any other noted sect among these heathens?

F. There are a great many, but the most noted are the Bramins, who have a tradition in a book, telling that there is one supreme god named Mahaden, and that god appeared ten times in ten different shapes, and they have ten images representing the different shapes in which he appeared, which are so monstrous and terrible that they are enough to fill a strange spectator with terror.

S. Have the Bramins any moral rules?

F. Yes they have; and some of them are worthy of relation: 1. Thou shalt not kill any living creature; 2. Thou shalt make a covenant with thy five senses: with thine eyes, not to look upon evil; with thine ears, not to listen to evil; with thy tongue, not to say any evil; with thy taste, not to taste any evil; with thy hands, to feel no evil. 3. Keep the time of devotion, worship and prayer with an upright heart. 4. Tell no false reports; and deceive not thy brother in bargains and agreements, to gain something to thyself. 5. Be kind and merciful, give to the poor what he stands in need of according to thine ability. 6. Oppress not thy brother. 7. Set apart some time for fasting and watching, that thou mayest be more suitable for worship and holiness. 8. Thou shalt not steal the least thing, and be contented with thy wages.

S. Have they any ceremonies at their funerals?

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F. Yes they have; they bring the corpse to the side of some water, then setting it down, saying, O earth, we commend this our brother to thee, thou hast an interest in him; of thee he was made, by thee he was fed. Then they kindle a fire, and say, when alive, he lived by thy heat, therefore we turn this body to thee to be purified; then after it is burnt, they say, casting the ashes into the air, when alive he breathed by the air, and now after he has breathed his last, we give it to thee; and when the ashes is falling upon the water, they say, O water, when alive, he lived by thy moisture, and now when his body is divided, take thou a part of it.

S. What, do they burn their dead!

F. Aye; that is the common practice among the heathen in the eastern countries of Asia. The Pagan priests in Japan, called bonzes, perform the ceremonies of their honorable funerals; they clothed with linen, go before the corpse to the pile, carrying a wax candle; when they come to the pile, the chief of them goes around the pile three times, turning the candle around his head, to shew thereby, as they say, that the soul is without beginning or end and then casts it away, which candle, the nearest relation of the dead takes up and kindles the pile with it to burn the corpse; after it is burnt, they gather the ashes and put it into a coffin gilded with gold, and hang it up in the house for some time, then bury it with much pomp and honour; and every seven days, seven months, and seven years, the nearest relations burn incense and worship their departed parents.

S. Are there any temples and images in Japan?

F. Yes, there are many; I'll only give some hints of the most noted. There is a large Pagan temple 21 in Mecca, which is the largest town in Japan; the temple is very high, the roof of which is an arch of stone supported by great pillars of hewn stone. In this temple there is an image of copper, the chair of which is seventy feet high and eighty feet broad; the head of the image is large enough to hold fifteen men, and the circumference of its thumb is forty inches. The temple is built upon a high hill, and the ascent to the temple on both

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sides is supported by fifty pillars of hewn stones ten paces from one another, and on the top of each pillar a large lantern to give light in the night, which appear very superbly. There are sixty more temples in the city and four hundred images; and on the road between Surengo and Iedo, there is a great image of copper, named Dabis, in the form of a man sitting on his legs, stretching out his arms twenty-two feet high. The priests called bonzes, pretend that their god appears to a young lady, a virgin, whom they bring every new moon to the temple, sitting before the great image, and light all the golden lamps and burn sweet incense, and then pretending that all the lamps are put out miraculously, something in the form of a man comes and embraces the young lady, and sometimes she conceives somehow. When she comes out of the temple, she is greatly honoured and diverted with music, and they say that she is so much spiritualized, that she can solve any questions put to her.

S. Are the people foolish enough to believe their priests!

F. Likely they are, for their priests keep all the secrets of their religion to themselves.

S. Are there any christians in these parts of the world?

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F. There are a few in the great India, the empire of the great mogul, who kept the Christian religion in its purity through many tribulations, from the time in which St. Thomas preached there, and Christianity began in Japan in the year 1630 by the Portuguese, but as they preached the supremacy of the Pope, they were accused as traitors to the government; a bloody battle ensued, which lasted three days, when the monarch of Japan gained the field; and since that time, there is not any of the Christian name admitted by the government to live there; and their mode of punishment by death is terrible.

S. What is the religion of China and Tartary.

F. There are three sects of idolaters in China:

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1. The followers of Lilaocum; he taught that God is of a bodily shape, and has appointed demigods under him. His followers learn magic or the art of foretelling things to come, by conversing with the devil, and they pretend to make a decoction of drink which produces immortality. The 2d sect are the followers of Confusius, whom they say, was very noted in his time; gave many moral rules and taught philosophy; he taught that God is of a substance the most pure and perfect and the source of all beings. Though he forbade idolatry, there are many temples built for him, where he is worshiped with much reverence. The 3d and most numerous sect, are those who worship the great image called Vo, which they count to be the only God in the world; the priests of this image teach many moral rules, and say there is a state of rewards and punishments in the next world. The priests undergo many forms of penance and sufferings for the people, and pretend that their sufferings have worth sufficient to alone for them and make intercession; and they say, they can apply the effects of these sufferings to those who are the most liberal to them. They have also a great number of small images in their houses, streets and ships; and sometimes, when they cannot get what they need by praying on them, they take them down and drag them through the dung along the streets. If they happen to obtain what they want at this time, they will clean and replace the images with much reverence, making confession and begging their pardon. They also worship the sun, moon and rivers, and the souls of their ancestors. The country is full of temples, and the temples, full of images and lamps, which burn night and day. A temple in the vicinity of Pekin is one hundred and sixty-five feet high, in which there is an image of a woman one hundred and six feet high. They have rooms near the temples, for persons most inclined to devotion, and who are willing to undergo penance and sufferings to obtain the favour of the gods. The Chinese have great confidence in their magicians, who pretend they can tell all that will happen to a man, by the day on which he was born, and there are happy days they say on which men should begin any work, buy and sell, to marry and die.

S. What is the religion of the Tartars?

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F. The eastern Tartars are idolaters, not very different from the Chinese, only they have a god, a living man called Lama, and they give him the character of Eternal Father, his seat is in Barantola; he sitteth in a dark palace, which is illuminated by lamps. His worshippers fall on their faces to the ground before him, and kiss his feet with great reverence. 24 The priests, to keep the people in ignorance and make them believe he is immortal, are careful to set up one of themselves in his stead when necessary; they fix upon one who is most like him. This god has such power through Tartary, that no king can be crowned in that country, before he brings great gifts to him and asks his blessing. I might describe the idolatry of the numerous isles of Ladrone and Philippine in the east, but it is too tedious a task at present.

S. What is the religion of Africa?

F. They are a most all idolaters and worship birds, beasts, lofty trees, forests, seas, rivers and the hosts of heaven; hut the principal god of the inhabitants of Guinea and Negro Land, is the serpent. Some of the Pagans, sometimes sacrifice their most beloved wives to their Gods. African Pagans are the most ignorant and brutish of any, and have hardly any images or temples. They have some notion of some very high God, but too high to take any notice of them, and too far to have any favour asked of him. They worship the devil, whom they believe to be the author of all evil, lest he should hurt them. The Hottentots, the inhabitants of the large country Cafaria, worship the moon when full and new, crying to it to grant pasture for their cattle and plenty of milk. It appears by some of their ceremonies and customs, that they received some traditions from the old Israelites and that they have some notion of the fall of man. They worship also some little fly, believing, if any kill this little god, their cattle will die of the plague. They also worship their valiant and worthy ancestors, believing they have some protection from these saints after death. The Egyptians and Carthagenians, 25 have once been very artful and powerful; but they are now poor and insignificant by reason of the desolations of wars.

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S. I wish now to hear something of the religion of Europe.

F. Most of the noted gods of Europe in the old times, and the western parts of Asia, are mentioned in the scriptures; as Baal, Baal Peor, Baal Beerith, Moloch, Miliom, Remphan, Astaroth and Beelzebub; Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Mercury, Venus and Diana; and as the Christian and Mahometan religion have prevailed over these parts, I will not take the trouble of describing the superstitious, abominable and cruel idolatry of these parts, nor the reformation made by the impostor Zorastes among the Persians.

S. I think I have heard of oracles among the heathens, and I would wish to know what oracles they had?

F. The Lord Jehovah favoured the church of Israel with divine oracles, by which he revealed secret things of public importance; and the devil also invented his oracles among the heathens, in order to deceive and secure them in idolatry; especially in these four places, in the temple of Belus in Babylon, in the temple of Hercules in Tyros, in the temple of Diana at Ephesus, and in the temple of Jupiter, in the wilderness of Lybia. It was common with the Pagan kings and emperors in matters of importance, to ask the advice of these oracles, and the priests or sometimes the devil himself would answer in the image, in such ambiguous language, that the answers might afterward be explained consistent with the event.

S. Great deception, devilish mysteries! c

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F. Ay; by cheating and deceiving, the devil maintains his kingdom in every age of the world. Many millions are yet deceived with a superstitious religion, though not quite in the same manner.

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S. Strange superstition and abominable idolatry have prevailed over the old world; certainly the new world is not so much given to idolatry; please to tell me father, what was the religion of America when first discovered?

F. You will find that all the world is much alike in this respect, for the Indians in America worshipped the moon and the sun. They had an image of the moon on the top of a heap of earth, which heap was 525 yards in circumference; and on another heap, 750 yards in circumference, they had an image of the sun: these were the idols of the old Mexicans called Chichimeras. But the inhabitants of Mexico, at the time it was conquered by the Spaniards, were not the same with these, but another nation who conquered the Chichimeras some centuries before, and these also worshipped the sun and moon but had no images of them. The images in the temples of Mexico when conquered by the Spaniards, were in the form of a man. Some of them, especially the god of war, which was dressed and armed, and was terrible to look upon and sat upon a throne, which throne was upon a round ball representing the globe and was of a sky colour. There were no less than 8 grand temples for this image, and 200 small temples consecrated to different gods; each street had its own particular gods with particular altars, to whom the inhabitants applied when under affliction for relief. They had another image in the form of a man called Tezealicup and was the god of repentance, before which they worshipped in time of distress. 27 They had also an image of dough, to which the prisoners appointed for sacrifice were to present themselves and were to worship.

S. Why then, did they sacrifice men!

F. Yes, upon some important occasions; and some have observed that their superstitious worship has some resemblance of the religion of the old Israelites. It appears the Carthaginians received seine tradition of Abraham's sacrificing his son Isaac, and from that came their custom of sacrificing human beings on certain occasions; and perhaps the pagans of America, got the like tradition from Carthage, which was a large and powerful city in Africa; for the Carthaginians used to send ships with some thousands of men and

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women, to the Canary islands, and some of them might lose their course and be driven by the winds to the coasts of South America, whence they could not return because of the trade wind: who can tell but the first population of South America was effected in this way?

S. Had these pagans priests?

F. They had priests, and a high priest who held his office hereditary; and when a man was to be sacrificed, they brought him to the foot of the stairs of the temple of Repentance, giving him the image made up of dough mixed with honey, saying, This is thy god; then after some other ceremonies, he was fixed on the top of a green stone, and six of the priests ready to sacrifice him, two hold his feet and two his hands, while the fifth puts a wooden collar about his neck, and the sixth, which was the high priest, opens his breast with a knife of flint, taking out the heart and presents it to the sun, then casts it to the image: the priests at this time were 28 painted black, and the high priest dressed in a red mantle, with a crown of feathers of several colours on his head. They had also an image called Quidzalcoalt, the god of merchandize. It is said that the old inhabitants of Mexico had some tradition of an invisible God, which they called Pacha Camac Pacha, which name they say signifies, in their language, the soul of the creation, but because he was invisible, they worshiped him in their hearts. They had a temple for the sun in a fine village near the city Lima, and that temple was built by the advice of a man, who pretended to have come down from the sun, and they should worship God by directing their devotion to the sun.

Mr. Harriot says, that the Indians of North America believed there was one high God without beginning; that he created some gods at first, then he created the sun, moon and stars, as inferior gods, and servants of the superior gods, and at that time the water was created, of which the gods made all things; and at last a woman, who conceived by one of the gods and children, from whom all mankind descended. They had some tradition of the immortality of the soul, and that when departed from the body, it either goes to dwell with the gods, or else is cast down to some terrible pit of fire, both of which they imagine

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to be far to the southwest. They worshipped the sun with great reverence; one of the chief articles of their sacrifice, was tobacco. Colonel Beverly said that he visited many of their towns, but could not well discover their religion, for these Indians counted it sacrilege to shew the principles of their religion to strangers. They had a few images of the human form, very roughly and poorly made, and some sort of 29 temples. Likely some of the Indians of North America were fond of conversing with the devil; they had a place to heal their bodily disorders, called Powaw or Hot House; after sweating themselves well in this, used to run to some creek or river and plunge themselves: so they cured their diseases. Sometimes the priest, who had the most conversation with the devil, went by the name of Powaw, who came to the sick when applied to, and would scream and howl terribly, and use some other ceremonies of conjury. The men were very slothful and idle, and make their squaws or wives work for them and build their wigwams; the men go together in companies to hunt. They abide in one place till they burn all the wood round about, then remove elsewhere; and they thought the Europeans came over because they burnt all their wood at home. They were very ignorant and knew nothing of reading and writing, yet they kept account of the time by the moon and night seasons. Some of them had a tradition, that the chief God, made at first, a man and woman out of stone, whom after they displeased him, he broke and then made others out of wood, who were root of all mankind; that all have an immortal soul, who if good, shall go after death to an everlasting feast with the great God, and if bad, must wander about in fear and horror forever. If any would tell them of the resurrection of the body, their answer was, we shall never believe that. Mr. Elliot, an eminent minister of the gospel from England, has been very successful in bringing many of them to the Christian faith and piety in New England, in the former part of the seventeenth century. c2

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S. You mentioned, God gave divine oracles to the Israelites; were not the Jews also idolators.

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F. The Jews were favoured with the knowledge of the living and true God, and with particular directions how to worship him; but they were always prone to go a whoring from God, and to worship him alter the idolatrous manner of the Gentiles, till at last, by divine permission and appointment, in order to punish them for their idolatry, they were led into captivity by the Babylonians, and remained there seventy years. Since that time, they have left idolatry, and go about to establish their own self-righteousness and lay much stress on vain traditions. They had an ardent expectation of the promised Messiah, but when he came, they refused and crucified him, because his kingdom was not of this world as they expected it to be, and thereby, have brought the curse of God upon themselves; and since the destruction of Jerusalem, they are scattered among all nations, so to remain till their unbelief shall be removed by some miraculous means. Their numerous traditions may be seen in their two Talmuds, the Talmud of Jerusalem and Talmud of Babylon.

S. You mentioned some religion called the Mahometan religion; I wish to know something of it.

F. The great impostor, Mahomet, was born in Arabia Felix, about the year 570; and though he was not a scholar, he was very witty and courageous. He was a descendant of the chief men of Mecca. There are many false traditions of visions and miracles, respecting his conception, birth, and childhood, not worth mentioning. He married a very rich widow in Mecca, which agreeably to his ambitious desire, raised him to a high station and 31 power. When he was about twenty-eight years old and being a great trader, he obtained a considerable knowledge of the Jewish and Christian religion, and formed his new religion as a reformation of the old. And in order to accomplish his scheme, when about thirty-eight years old he entered into a cave near Mecca, where he invented the form of his new religion, and composed the most part of the Alcoran, which is the Mahometan bible. Then after two years, he appeared in the character of God's apostle, and pretended to have seen many visions, and to have received his commission from God, by the angel Gabriel. The sum of his creed is very short, containing the name of God and the name of

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Mahomet in the Arabic language: Laellah Ellalah Mahomed Kesulallah; i. e. there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet. Which Mahomet said was written on the right side of the throne of God, when he was led up by the angel Gabriel, through the six heavens to the seventh, which was the habitation of God, and these words he said were written on the porches of each heaven. He said that he was admitted into the presence of God in the seventh heaven, as near as with in two bow shot, and that there was a veil on the face of God seventy thousand fold; that God conversed with him; manifested many secrets and myteries and raised him above all mankind, &c. He died about the sixty-third year of his age in Medina, and was buried there under the bed in which he died, by the advice of Abubeker, his father-in-law, and the greatest promoter of his religion at that time. As there was great dispute where to bury him, this Abubeker said that prophets should be buried in the place where they die.

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S. Are there many ceremonies in this religion?

F. The articles of their religion, the ceremonies of their worship, their washings, fastings, pilgrimages, processions, sickness and death, are very numerous, and too tedious and trifling to be mentioned at this time.

S. Are the followers of this visionary man numerous?

F. Very numerous; the most numerous in the world.

S. Strange! how can that be?

F. It is surprising; yet if we consider how his religion came to be embraced by so many nations of the world, it will not appear so strange.

S. How did his religion prevail so much?

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F. In the first place, his relations, the first embracers and promoters of his religion, were men of honour and power in the world. 2d. The impostor himself became a military and political officer; he allowed great liberty to his soldiers and great rewards to the conquerors; by these, his religion prevailed much by the sword. 3d. The paradise of carnal pleasures, he promised to his followers in the world to come, brought many millions to embrace his religion. 4th. Many of the countries and cities where this religion prevailed, were once favoured with the Christian religion, but because of their abuse of the gospel, and want of concern for their salvation through Christ, they were given up for some time to themselves, to strong delusions to believe a lie.

S. Are there any Christians in these parts at this time?

F. Yes there are; and this leads me to give some hints of the Greek church, which includes those 33 churches in the Grecian states, and who are now tributary to the Turks. This church denies the supremacy of the pope, and it is governed by four patriarchs, viz: 1. The patriarch of Alexandria, who is over the churches in Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia and India. 2. Patriarch of Jerusalem, over the churches in Palestine and Canaan. 3. Patriarch of Antioch, over the churches in Silesia, Mesopotamia, and Syrophinicia. 4. Patriarch of Constantinople, over the churches in Illiricum, Epirus, Peloponnesus, Achaia and the Isles of Archipelago, Bythynia, Capadocia, Missa, and the seven churches of the Lesser Asia. These patriarchs govern these churches by arch-bishops, bishops, and priests, and they were once very numerous, but now many of these places are altogether overrun by Mahometanism. The patriarchs are chosen by the bishops, except the patriarch of Constantinople, who was to be confirmed in his office by the emperor grand senior after the bishops choose the person; and this confirmation was done with great pomp, according to the custom of the Grecian emperors, by presenting a white horse, black cloak, shepherd's staff, and a vest full of pictures. After the patriarch mounts the horse, followed by a large company of priests, Grecian nobles, and a great many Turkish officers, to the patriarchal chair, in the church, at the porch of which he is met by many of his

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bishops with much reverence, with wax torches in their hands; then before the altar he is consecrated by the archbishop, who then takes him in his hand and sets him in the patriarchal chair, a mitre on his head and the crosier in his hand, and singing the service, the ceremonies are over; and the emperor grand senior is paid on the occasion ten thousand, and sometimes twenty-five thousand crowns.

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S. Is their worship overloaded with carnal ceremonies, like that of the Roman church?

F. Too much so.

S. What religion is there in Russia?

F. The Greek church prevails there. The Russians till the year 990 were Pagans; when Waldemirius, duke of Russia, married the princess Ann, sister of Constantius, emperor of Constantinople; consequently Russia came to embrace Christianity as practised by the Greek church. Upon some dispute raised in Constantinople, the grand senior moved the Patriarchal seat to Sio, one of the isles of the Archipelago; and from there, with the consent of the government of Russia, the patriarchial seat of Constantinople was moved to Moscow, in Russia. in this city, there is not less than twelve or fifteen hundred churches, and eleven patriarchs have succeeded each other, till Peter Czar, emperor of Russia, dissolved this office as unnecessary, and took upon himself to govern the church, and it must be allowed that he was a man of great wisdom and greatly reformed the church.

S. Do there any belonging to the Greek church devote themselves to a single life?

F. Yes many; but the most noted, are those of Mount Athos in Macedonia; there are here no less than six thousand men without any woman near them.

S. How do they live there?

F. They are very industrious in their occupation and they receive a considerable supply from strangers coming to see the place and their daily devotion; and some of them from their town go abroad and bring back a good deal of money.

S. Have you any thing more to say of this church?

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F. Yes; much more than I can say at present; and I am sorry to say, that though their creed and doctrine are agreeable to the New Testament, their numerous ceremonies, sacraments, excommunications, images, processions, monks and nuns, prove plainly that they have backslidden and have departed from the simplicity of the gospel.

Thus my son have I enquired into the four great branches of the religion of the whole world, and I found myself under great obligations to be thankful to the Lord, who hath ordered my lot so well, that I was born and brought up where the light of the gospel shone. I plainly saw that the heaven became vain in their imaginations; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four footed beasts and creeping things, and changed the truth of God into a lie, and served the creature more than the Creator; wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts. And by comparing the Old and New Testaments, I found that the ceremonial law of Moses was abolished, when the kingdom of the gospel was set up, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I looked at the Mahometan religion as unworthy of any man's attention, and I thought the Greek church to be too far distant for me to join it, if I could reconcile myself to her ceremonies. Then I betook myself to the important and needful task, of enquiring whether the protestant religion in which I was brought up, was consistent with the truth or not; and I looked at this inquiry as more necessary, when I understood that the protestant religion was publicly condemned by the Popish church as heretical.

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S. Does the church of Rome condemn the protestants as heretics?

F. Yes, they do.

S. Every party is too ready to condemn another; but perhaps you are partial, for many of the Roman Catholics are great gamblers.

F. I know they are; but partiality should not have place in things of so great importance as the everlasting happiness or misery of our souls; and I humbly think I entertain no partiality in this case. My great object was to examine whether I was one of the damnable heretics or not, and whether the Popish or Protestant religion was right, and I think I took the right rules to examine.

S. What rules did you take, for I must confess I am ignorant in this affair, and I have seldom heard you say any thing against the Roman Catholics.

F. Likely not, for I am not fond of condemning any party, if I can help it. But as Protestants are condemned as heretics, and you appeared to disregard my testimony against gambling, because many gamblers call themselves Roman Catholics, I think it my duty, not by carnal reasoning or by cruel measures, but by sober and just rules of examination to defend myself and the Protestant religion by appealing to the truth.

S. What rules are they?

F. The roles of moral reason and the word of God, or in other words, the rules of scripture and common sense.

S. How and where did you begin?

F. I could hardly tell at first where to begin, for I always thought the Protestant religion was consistent with the bible and productive of holiness. Then I thought it the surest way to compare both 37 religions with the word of God, which I did and found to the highest

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satisfaction, that the protestant religion is much more consistent with the bible and reason than the popish religion.

S. But perhaps their bible and ours are not the same; they may have the right and we the wrong translation.

F. So they say; but let it be so, it appears that their religion is not only inconsistent, but contrary also to the whole tenor of their own bible. I allow there is some difference in the bibles; they having some words and sentences added, others taken out and others changed, and all this to favour their superstition. But it is not very difficult to prove, that the protestant bible is more consistent with the original than theirs. All the versions, translations, and publications of the Holy Bible may be traced down from the time of Aquila the Jewish proselyte of Pontius to the present time; and undoubtedly there have been very learned and excellent divines among the protestants, especially in the time of the reformation; and indeed the contest was of so much importance, that they were very diligent in their search for the truth, and not for the sake of honour and worldly gain; but on the contrary, it was for the sake of the glory of Christ and a pure conscience, they hazarded their lives for the truth, and many thousands of them suffered the torments of the popish inquisition, prison, rack, fire and sword, with much patience and meekness and cheerfulness; yea they were full of the love of Christ, while their persecutors were full of pride, wrath and malice. Many millions of the protestants suffered death for their religion (in the dominions of the pope and church of Rome) in the same spirit as the primitive Christians D 38 under the persecutions of the Pagans; and this is one proof that the protestants are not heretics, but true Christians, and have adhered to the truth of the gospel, while the church of Rome has deviated and departed from the truth, and have fallen into a mixture of errors and superstition. And because the protestants took the word of God alone, as the rule of faith and obedience, and not conformed to their superstitions, they have persecuted and tormented them enough to fill spectators with horror; and this persecuting disposition of theirs, is certainly contrary to the golden rule and mild dispensation of the gospel, that we should do to others as we would have others

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do to us. It seems that the popish church may be called the church of Rome and not the church of Christ; the protestant church may be called the protestant church, because she protested against the errors of the church of Rome, and she is worthy to be called the church of Christ, because he is her foundation and head; the word of Christ is her laws, and the honor of Christ her aim, and the power of the grace and spirit of Christ, strengthened her to adhere to the truth in the midst of trials and persecutions.

S. Why should not the popish church be called the church of Christ; was she not the first Christian church?

F. Papists say so; but it is not true; for the first Christian church was in Jerusalem, the next in Antioch, the capital city of Syria. I grant there was a Christian church at Rome very early, and St. Paul wrote her an excellent epistle. Papists pretend the apostle Peter was twenty-five years bishop of Rome; that he was possessed with supremacy over all the apostles, and that from him, this supremacy is conveyed to all the popes till the present day. But there was not a word concerning Peter, in Paul's salutations to those of Rome, and not a word of him in the epistles which Paul wrote from there, though he mentioned persons of far inferior character. But suppose Peter had this supremacy, who gave it to him, and what had he to merit it except his infirmities? by his infirmities he was suited to sympathize with and warn Christians, but not rule over them as a head; then this supremacy is not only unfounded, but quite contrary to the words of Christ. And it is contrary to common sense, to think that Peter left his office to such persons of wicked character as the popes were, who were persons of the most infamous and wretched characters found in history. According to the lists we have, there have been about 230 bishops or popes in Rome; some of the first were men of piety, though not remarkable for learning. But since the church of Rome fell from the truth, and the popes invested with supremacy over church and state; among one hundred and sixty-five popes, not one appeared to have any degree of the grace of God in him; and many of them have been noted for falsehood, whoredom, magic, perjury, murder, and almost every thing horrid. Although I allow there may be some pious persons in the church of Rome and some

wicked and erroneous persons among the protestants, yet this is not the point in dispute, but the contest is, whether the protestant church, as represented by the church of Rome, is heretical, and whether the church of Rome in her present state, can be considered the church of Christ? It appears to me, upon the most solemn deliberation, that the popish church, though possessing infallibility, cannot be 40 the church of Christ with any propriety, as long as she professes Peter to be the rock of her foundation and the pope her head, and supports herself by the weapons of this world. Christ said, my kingdom is not of this world.

S. What do you say father, does the Church of Rome profess infallibility?

F. Yes, she does; and that appears to me the worst of all her errors, for it is an opening door to all other errors, and shutting door against all reformation. Who can expect reformation in any church or society considering themselves infallible! It is upon pretence of this infallibility of the pope and church of Rome, her unscriptural and unreasonable rites, ceremonies and superstitions are imposed upon the people, and the people are not to say any thing against them. And as long as the people believe that their church is infallible, it does not become them to reject her commands nor doubt her directions, for it is unreasonable to charge any one with error, who we believe cannot err. But it wounds my heart, to think, that this ungrounded belief of theirs, will prove the eternal ruin of many millions of souls in the church of Rome, as they rest secure and unconcerned about salvation, believing, that though they spend their lives in wickedness, without love to God and faith in Christ, if they conform to the ceremonies of the church, and do as the priest directs, then they are sure of heaven at their death, or at least will be admitted there some time out of purgatory.

S. I can hardly believe the church of Rome does profess infallibility, for I thought none could claim that but God himself.

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F. Yes they do; and by this infallibility, they maintain that the authority of the church is above the authority of the bible, and it is evident that papists do pay great regard to the ceremonies of the church though they have no regard to the bible.

S. That is strange indeed, how can you prove it father?

F. I might produce many proofs, but may this one suffice at this time; pope Agatho, who ascended the Roman chair in the year 678, published an edict, wherein he affirmed that “all the sanctions of the Apostolic See, were in such manner to be received, as if they were confirmed by the divine voice of Peter himself; that the Roman church had never deviated from the truth, but had always remained inviolably pure and uncorrupt, nor was it capable of falling into errs.” Pope Constantine, in 708, pretended to all power in heaven and earth. Upon this pretended infallibility and power, the church of Rome, claims compliance and obedience to all her superstitious ceremonies and institutions, until this day; while the protestants refuse compliance and obedience to any ceremonies, but such as appointed by Christ the head of the church, and has declared them in his word by direct or indirect commands.

S. Are there many ceremonies and institutions in the church of Rome, besides those that are founded on scriptural authority?

F. It appears there are a great many, and these not only unfounded on scripture authority, but quite contrary to scripture.

S. Please to mention them, and shew the opinion of the protestants respecting them. D 2
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F. To mention them all is too tedious, I will only mention the most essential in the contest between the protestants and papists. I have mentioned two already, and that is their pretended infallibility, and the absolute power of the pope over church and state. These two errors along with the third, viz. that ignorance is a nurse to godliness, and thereupon

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forbidding the bible to the common people in their Own language, the hearing of the gospel preached by any other denomination, and direct mass to be read and said in Latin, constitute the basis of the Roman church. By the first, she claims the submission of people of all ranks and character to her laws; by the second, she claims compliance with all her ceremonies, and obedience to all her institutions; by the third, she is cunning enough to keep the people in ignorance, for you know, if we wish to keep any unlawful thing in the house, it is best to shut all the windows to prevent light. When the clergy of any denomination wish float their people should not be well informed, there is reason to suspect their sincerity.

S. Is it needful that the common people should have the bible in their own language?

F. The protestants think they should have the bible and preaching in their own language; for St. Paul says that faith is by hearing and hearing by the word of God; and it appears that people should have liberty to read, hear and examine, and judge for themselves, for the apostle says, “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” It will not do in the last day to make excuses, and say we were ignorant, and took it for granted that our clergy were right, seeing the Lord has given us his word, that we might, as Christ has commanded, 43 “search the scriptures.”—John 5. 30, and the Bereans are commended by the Holy Ghost, because they searched the scriptures daily, to see if the things preached by the apostles were so; Acts 17. 11. and St. Paul said to the saints generally, *let the words of Christ dwell in you richly*; Col. 3. 16. and St. Peter says, *that the words of the prophets, was more sure than the voice which the apostles heard from Heaven*; 2 Pet. 1. 19. and St. Paul said, *if any would preach, even an angel from Heaven, contrary to what was preached, let him be accursed*; Gal. 1. 8, 9. which plainly shews that Christians should read the bible and treasure up the scriptures in their hearts. The church of Rome recommends ignorance as the nurse of godliness; but God saith, *my people are destroyed for want of knowledge*, Hos. 4. 6. and again the Lord saith, *because thou hast despised knowledge, I will despise thee*. And now my dear son, the protestants thought it better to be despised and persecuted by the church of Rome, for searching the scriptures and

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judging for themselves in points of religion and divine worship, than to be despised by God for their negligence and ignorance. And I really believe, if these three things I have mentioned, were removed, as they are the pillars of the church of Rome, the rest would fall immediately.

S. I thought that riches and a great revenue were her greatest support.

F. True; but if the supremacy of the pope, the pretended infallibility of the church and the ignorance of the people be removed, her revenue would not be much; and likely if the ignorance of people were changed to substantial and consistent knowledge of the bible, the supremacy of the pope and 44 pretended infallibility of the church could not stand long. And I cannot help thinking, that many of their clergy are apprehensive of this danger, else they would allow the common people to read the bible and to hear the gospel preached by other denominations, as the protestants do; for they know that the truth of the gospel, by the blessing of God, is able to stand without the carnal weapons of the world. And the apostle Peter, in his charge to the ministers of the gospel, tells them, *that they should not be lords over God's heritage, but be ensamples to the flock*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. Another essential dispute between the protestants and papists, is the doctrine of transubstantiation, for the church of Rome asserts, that the bread and wine in the sacrament of the holy supper, are changed into the real flesh and blood of Christ; and Luther himself, even after his conversion, was not quite clear from this error.

S. Do not the scriptures say plainly, this is my flesh, and this is my blood?

F. That is true; but we should compare different parts of scripture together: the best key of scripture, is scripture itself. Christ said that he is the vine, the door and the way; these words are not to be understood in a natural but figurative sense: in a spiritual sense, Christ is the vine, door and way. The bread and wine in the holy supper, represent the body and blood of Christ; i. e. they are a commemoration of his suffering and death, and are a sign of spiritual nourishment to those who believe in Christ. It appears, by comparing the

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scriptures and consulting the rule of common sense, that nothing more is intended by the bread and wine in the holy supper, than that they should be signs and seals. To consider them as changed into the body and blood 45 of Christ, appears to be blasphemy. Christ himself said, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, entereth into the belly and is cast out into the draught.—Many thousands partake of this bread and wine, who live in sin and rebellion against God, whose portion shall be forever in hell; is it not blasphemy to say that these are partakers of the real body and blood of Christ. What would follow, from granting that the bread and wine became the real flesh and blood of Christ? Undoubtedly this would follow, that every one who is a communicant in the church of Rome, or has been a partaker of the bread and wine, shall be saved unavoidably; for Christ himself has said it, over and over again, that he who eateth of his flesh and drinketh of his blood, hath eternal life, John 6. 51—57. If the bread and wine be changed into the real body and blood of Christ, then every one, let his character be what it will, whether he be a believer or an unbeliever, or even if he sin against the Holy Ghost, he shall be saved, he has eternal life, because he partook of the flesh and blood of Christ. But how can this be? for the very same person who said, he that eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood hath eternal life, said also, *he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark 16. 16. Now upon the popish principle of transubstantiation, there is an evident contradiction in the words of Christ; but Christ is the way, the truth and the life, therefore we must explain these words, this is my flesh and blood in a figurative sense, as meaning the bread and wine are a representation of his flesh and blood; and if we explain thousands of passages in writings sacred and profane in the same manner, why may not this be explained so? Then as the word of God is consistent 46 with itself and with common sense, we must reject this ungrounded doctrine of transubstantiation. Besides, it may be added, upon this principle of transubstantiation, the body of Christ must be very large, and must be in many places at once. It is also contrary to our senses, our eyes, smell and taste; bread and wine we see, bread and wine we smell, and bread and wine we taste, but according to the papists, it is the body of Christ we eat, and his blood we drink; none but the ignorant and deluded can believe it. I might enlarge on this subject, by shewing you many instances of figurative

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expressions; the apostle says, that before faith came, we were kept under the law; it is plain, that Christ is meant, who is the object of faith. And so it is plain, that bread and wine are called the body of Christ, because they are appointed as signs of his sufferings; and as bread and wine are suitable for the nourishment of the body, they are excellent signs, that by the application of the sufferings of Christ by faith, our souls are nourished to salvation.

Another controverted point between the protestants and church of Rome, is the intercession of the virgin Mary, the apostles, saints and angels.

S. What, is that true! what can they do?

F. Yes it is true; it is maintained and preached till the present day. The pope Zachary, who mounted the papal throne in the year 757, declared the virgin Mary, and the apostles to be our mediators and intercessors with God, and increased the number of superstitious relics. This proud person suffered himself to be worshipped by Pepin king of France. The Litany of the Mass, mentions a great number of saints and angels by name, and has an 47 application to all the priests and Levites, all the martyrs, all the bishops, all confessors and teachers, all monks and hermits, and all the holy virgins, in these words, *pray for us*. But they have also a particular Litany, in which they call on the virgin Mary under about thirty-eight titles, to pray for them.

S. I wonder at their superstitious prayers, but what is the next thing in dispute between them and the protestants?

F. Another essential point is the worship of images.

S. Worship of images! how can that be; for I have learned the commandments, and the second expressly forbids the worship of images; if that was unlawful, under the Mosaical dispensation, I should think it much more unlawful under the spiritual dispensation of the gospel.

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F. You are right; but image worship is a part of the superstition of the church of Rome; and it is likely they have taken out that commandment from the decalogue, and have added something else, or have divided another commandment and made it two, and this to supply the place of the second which they have removed, and so make up the number: they have removed the second, because it expressly, as you said, forbids the worship of images.

S. But I suppose they do not worship them as gods, but worship God through them?

F. True; and so did the heathen idolaters; and so the Israelites, when God reproved and punished them for their idolatry. They did not worship images as gods, but they worshipped the invisible God through them: they worshipped him by idols, 48 and not according to the rule of worship, delivered them by Moses: so does the Romish church, instead of taking the plain rule of Christ, to worship him in spirit and in truth.

S. I think they are but too much like the Israelites, when they would worship God by idols; but what is the next controversy?

F. The purgatory, established in the council of Florence, in the year 1439.

S. Purgatory, purgatory! what is that; is it the name of a person, place, or book?

F. It is a place, say they, between heaven and hell. Those not good enough to go to heaven, nor bad enough to go to hell, are sent for some time to the purgatory, to be purified and fitted for heaven.

S. That is strange to me, I thought there were but two places in the other world.

F. Likely you thought right; the scriptures mention but two places, heaven for the godly, and hell for the ungodly; then purgatory is of human invention, talked of for a while in this world, but cannot be found in the other world. And I am afraid that those who talk of this

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purgatory, if they are not fit to go to heaven, will find themselves in hell, without any hope of coming from there.

S. I thought you said that all who believe in Christ and have an interest in him, go into heaven after death, as he suffered for them, and gave full satisfaction to all the demands of divine justice in their stead, and none of them will suffer in the other world.

F. You thought right, this doctrine of purgatory casts a reproach on Christ as a saviour of sinner representing his obedience and suffering, as insufficient to atone for their sins.

49

S. Justification through Christ, and the justified suffering in the other world, seems surprising contradiction: but when do they come out of purgatory?

F. After giving satisfaction by their sufferings, or when the monks, holy nuns, and clergy have prayed them out, as the saying is.

S. Do these pray for them gratis?

F. O, no, no; they are commonly to pay for it before their death; by these means, most all the good land in England and Wales once became the property of the abbeyes and nunneries, it being given by great men of property, in order to be prayed out of purgatory.

S. Do the poor and the rich pay the same sum?

F. No; they are to pay according to their abilities.

S. But some poor man might be a greater sinner than the rich, and yet have less to pay; what then?

F. He must suffer the longer.

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S. I never thought the riches of this world had so much merit! but pray, are those who pay much delivered sooner than others?

F. To be sure; and some are so much favoured that they only go there a few days, though they had been wicked all their days; and some again are admitted into heaven immediately, if they be able and disposed to give enough of their estates to the church, for praying and interceding for them.

S. Enough of purgatory; I see it is nothing but a bugbear to scare people out of their property, and to have a greater number of people to join their church in hopes of something better than hell. But it is a pity that stay neglect the means of ascertaining whether there be such a place or no; for I fear that E 50 many who think they are going to a temporary prison, will find it eternal.

F. You say very right, I hope you will act accordingly.

S. I am convinced there is more need of knowledge than I ever thought; but I always supposed the Roman clergy to be men of great knowledge.

F. In the seventh century, they were very ignorant, nothing more was requisite to be a bishop than to read well, to sing, repeat the Lord's prayer, the creed, some short portions of the psalter, a few exorcisms, and a computation of festivals. Their liturgies usually consisted of the missal, psalter, lessons, antiphors, and legends of the saints, and to these an addition was made from time to time.—The rosary contains fifteen paternosters, one hundred and fifty Ave Maries. There were some learned writers and emperors in the ninth and tenth centuries; but these opposed the encroachments of the popes. And the bible was partly allowed to be the rule of faith, till the clergy in the eleventh century, declared the reading of the scriptures extremely dangerous. The clergy of the church of Rome were very ignorant; to learn the penitential rules was almost the only study of the priests. Genebraud owns that this age was so unhappy, among the Latins that they had not one man

among them fit, upon equal terms, to oppose the Greeks. The Roman writers themselves own and confess that the houses of the clergy, at this time, were prostituted places, for whores, assemblies of stage players, where gaming, dancing, and lewd singing were practised. The holy virgins were every where polluted with incest.—Nothing was more common than adultery, arrogance, pride, luxury, lust, covetousness, &c. Miracles 51 were also pretended. Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, attempted to prove transubstantiation before the people by a bloody host. Theades, a false prophetess, who was taught by a priest in Sweden for lucre's sake, to feign visions and prophecies, apparitions also of demons, and pretended voices of departed souls in the purgatory, &c. And ignorance, superstition, and pretended miracles prevailed in the church of Rome; pride, sloth and luxury, instead of learning and virtue. Pope Paul the 2d, decreed all learning to be heresy, about the year 1460. The protestant reformers were men of excellent learning, and since that, likely many of the Roman clergy are learned men too, but their superstitious religion confines them very much to such branches of learning as suit the tenets of their religion. The ignorance, impiety, and superstition of the Roman clergy, had a great weight on the minds of the protestants; and so the knowledge, piety and sincerity of the protestant divines, their unwearied industry, and their great concern for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, should have much weight on the mind of every sincere papist.

S. True; but what is the next thing in dispute; is there any thing?

F. Yes, there are a great many; as celibacy, holy days, holy water, sacrifice of the mass, withholding the cup in the holy supper from the people, seven sacraments, indulgences granted to the people, consecration of church-yards, baptism of bells, sign of the cross, penance, processions, fasting on fish in lent, eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, titles of archbishop, archdeacon, &c. priest's pontifical robes, and confession in the ear of the priest, palms, and many other customs too tedious to mention.

52

S. What is celibacy?

F. The single life of monks, nuns and priests, which, in the opinion of the protestants is very erroneous, because the God of nature ordained marriage as a needful state for the increase and happiness of mankind: and St. Paul said that marriage is honourable in all; even Peter, whom they pretend to be the predecessor of their popes, had a wife, and led her with him as he went to preach the gospel, and in his epistles, gives directions how husbands and wives should conduct themselves towards each other. And it appears from the words of Christ, respecting eunuchs, that he never appointed such laws. Besides, the confining of men and women to a single life, may be an occasion to them of committing adultery and sodomy. Celibacy is very contrary to their own sentiments respecting marriage, as being one of the seven sacraments; for in this case, they have one sacrament of which their clergy cannot partake.

S. This is strange indeed; but I am inclined to think, that as the clergy themselves invented this institution, that its end was to avoid being confined to any one woman in marriage, in order that their liberty with women might be boundless under this cloak of sanctity.

F. There is room for suspicion; however their pretence is, that because they are married to the church, therefore they should not marry a woman; but how far carnal gratification is enjoyed by being married to the church, I understand not.

S. I wish you to proceed to explain the rest of their superstitions institutions.

F. I had rather not, it will take up too much of our time.

? 3

emperors, with a number of the eastern bishops, Lewis the Pious, the emperor of Germany, and his successors Lotharius, Lewis the second and Charles the Bald. A vast number of provincial churches, Agobard, bishop of Lyons, Angilbert, archbishop of Milan, and Claude, bishop of Turin, opposed the worship of images, testified that Christ is the only head of the church and there is no mediator besides him, that all the apostles were

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equal to Peter, that the scripture is the only rule of faith and practise, no prayers should be made for the dead, and that all superstitious traditions of the church of Rome should be laid aside, and that the elements in the holy supper are but means to represent the body and blood of Christ to believers. So Bertram, Rabanus, and John Scot did the same. We should not forget the great Alfred, the king of England, the best scholar of his age, and the most excellent Christian that ever lived.

Tenth century. The same testimony maintained by numbers in Germany, France, and Britain; the council of Soissons, in France, published a confession of faith, the same in substance with those of protestant churches. Athelstan, Alfric, and Walfin of England, opposed transubstantiation.

Eleventh century. The popish errors were opposed by emperors of Germany, kings of England, vast numbers about Orleans in France, and in Flanders, Berongarius of Angiers, and some in Italy and Germany.

Twelfth century. Popery opposed by several kings of England, France and Sicily, and by Henry the 4th and 5th, emperors of Germany, and a number of other princes; by Fluentius, bishop of Florence, Joachim of Calabria, Peter Buis, and Henry, 58 both of France, Alnold of Breschia, and Bernard. But the Waldenses in the valley of Piedmont, Savoy and South of France, were the most noted witnesses for truth, against the errors of the church of Rome; they kept the purity of Christian faith and worship in this dark century; and in the

Thirteenth century, no less than a million of them were put to death in France, for opposing the errors of popery. In this century, Almeric and William of St. Amour in France, Robert Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln in England, loudly decried the abomination of the church of Rome.

Fourteenth century. The Waldenses continued their testimony, and were exceedingly multiplied in Bohemia, Austria, and places adjacent in the west of Germany. And in Britain they were called Lollards, from one of their able and learned preachers, or as some say,

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from their being sweet singers. About the middle of this century, an eminent man of the name of John Wickliffe, wrote a large testimony against popery; his books were read in the colleges of Oxford for thirty years after.

Fifteenth century. William Sawtre, Thomas Badby, Sir John Oldcastle, John Hut, and Jerom of Prague, John Trithemius, John Gettler, John Baptista, John Picus Mirandule and Savonarola brought their testimony against popery and sealed it with their blood.

Sixteenth century. When very dark, and the scripture most unknown, God raised up Luther in Germany, Zunglus, in Switzerland, and Calvin, in France, to search the scriptures, who, along with others, followed them; men of great learning and piety, opposed and exposed the abomination of the 59 Roman church, which entitled herself infallible, and the only church of Christ upon earth. Some of the most noted persons, stood up for the protestant cause in this century, besides Luther, Zuinglus, and Calvin, viz. Rodentton, Bucer, Beza, Melancton, Farellus, Bullinger, Occolempadius, Peter Virat, Farel, Wishart, Bilney, Hamilton, Hooper, Taylor, Bradford, Ridley, Cranmer, Rodgers, Saunders, Latimer, Philpot, Jewel, Knox, Decring, Gilpin, Fox, Greenham, Rollock, Perkins, Cartwright, and Tindal, who obtained a great learning in the languages, arts and sciences, in Oxford. One time it happened that a dispute took place between him and one of the popish prelates; the prelate, after all his arguments for popery failed, said, it is better to be without the law of God, than without the law of the pope; Tindal answered, I may defy the pope and his laws, and if God will lengthen my life for a few years, I will make the drivers of oxen ploughing the ground to know more of the scriptures than you, which likely he did, by translating the scriptures to the common language. He was burnt in Antwerp, ten years before the death of Luther. It appears that under the reign of Lewis the thirteenth and fourteenth, no less than two thousand protestant congregations were destroyed, several of which included no less than a thousand communicants. And some are of opinion that the number of protestants are almost twelve millions less than they have been, but infidels are more numerous than ever they have been in the Christian world.

PART II. AN ACCOUNT OF THE BURNING OF THE THEATRE IN RICHMOND, IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA, ON DECEMBER 26, 1811.

[From the American Standard....Extra.]

MOST DREADFUL CALAMITY.

“ Richmond, Friday December 27.

Last night the play-house in this city was crowded with an unusual audience. There could not have been less than six hundred persons in the house. Just before the conclusion of the play, the scenery caught fire, and in a few minutes, the whole building was wrapt in flames. It is already ascertained that sixty-one persons were devoured by that most terrific element. The editor of this paper was in the house, when the ever-to-be-remembered deplorable accident occurred. He is informed that the scenery took fire in the back part of the house by the raising of a chandelier; that the boy who was ordered by some of the players to raise it, 61 stated if he did so, the scenery would take fire, when he was commanded in a peremptory, manner, to hoist it. The boy obeyed, and the fire was instantly communicated to the scenery. He gave the alarm in the rear of the stage, and requested some of the attendants to cut the cords by which these combustible materials were suspended. The person whose duty it was to perform this business, became panic struck, and sought his own safety. This unfortunately happened at the time when one of the performers was playing near the orchestra, and the greatest part of the stage, with its horrid danger, was obscured from the audience by a curtain. The flames spread with almost the rapidity of lightning; and the fire falling from the ceiling upon the performer, was the first notice which the people had of their danger. Even then, many supposed it to be a part of the play, and were for a little time restrained from flight by a cry from the stage that there was no danger. The performers and their attendants endeavoured in vain, to tear down the scenery. The fire flashed into every part of the house with a rapidity, horrible and astonishing, and, alas! gushing tours and unspeakable anguish deprive me of utterance.

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No tongue can tell, no pen or pencil can describe the woeful catastrophe. No person, who was not present, can form an idea of this unexampled scene of human distress. The editor having none of his family with him, and being not far from the door, was among the first who escaped. No words can express his horror, when on turning round, he discovered the whole building in flames. There was but one door for the greatest part of the audience to pass. Men, women and children, pressing upon F 62 each other, while the flames were seizing upon those behind. The editor went to the different windows which were very high, and implored his fellow creatures to save their lives by jumping out of them. Those nearest the windows ignorant of their great danger, were afraid to leap down, whilst those behind them, were seen catching on fire, and writhing in the greatest agonies of pain and distress. At length those behind, urged by the pressing flames, pushed those out who were nearest the windows, and people of every description began to fall, one upon another, some with their clothes on fire; some half roasted; O wretched me! Oh afflicted people! Would to God I could have died a thousand deaths in any shape, could individual suffering have purchased the safety of my friends, my benefactors, of those whom I loved.*** The editor, with the assistance of others, caught several of those whom he had begged to leap from the windows. One lady jumped out when all her clothes were on fire. He tore them, burning, from her; stripped her of her last rags, and protecting her nakedness with his coat, carried her from the fire. Fathers and mothers were deploring the loss of their children; children the loss of their parents.—Husbands were heard to lament their lost companions; wives were bemoaning their burnt husbands. The people were seen wringing their hands, beating their heads and breasts, and those who had secured themselves, seemed to endure greater torments than those who were enveloped in the flames. Oh distracting memory! who, that saw this, can think of it again, and yet retain his senses. Do I dream? No, no, Oh that it were but a dream, My God! Who that saw his 63 friends and dearest connexions devoured by fire, and lying in heaps at the doors, will not regret that they ever lived to see such a sight? Could savages have seen this ever-memorable event, it would soften even their hearts. A sad gloom pervades this place, and every countenance is cast down to the earth. The loss of an hundred thousand friends in the field of battle,

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could not touch the heart like this. Enough. The most distant and implacable enemy, and the most savage barbarians will condole our unhappy lot. All of those who were in the pit escaped, and had cleared themselves from the house before those who were in the boxes could get down; and the door was for some time empty, Those from above were pushing each other down the steps, when the hindmost might have got out by leaping into the pit. A gentleman and lady, who otherwise would have perished, had their lives saved by being providentially thrown from the second boxes. There would not have been the least difficulty in descending from the first boxes into the pit. In addition to the list now given it is believed that at least sixty others perished, whose names are not yet ascertained.

George W. Smith, governor; A. B. Venable, president of the bank; Benjamin Botts, wife and niece; Mrs. Tayloe Braxton, Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Gallego, Miss Conyers, Lieut. J. Gibbon, in attempting to save Miss Conyers; Mrs. E. Page, Miss Louisa Mayo, Mrs. Urn. Cook, Miss Elvina Coutts, Mrs. John Lesley, Miss M. Nelson, Miss Page, Wm. Brown, Miss Juliana Hervey, Miss Whitlock, George Dixon, A. Marshall (of Wythe) broke his neck in attempting to jump from a window; Miss Ann Craig, Miss Stevenson, (of Spottsylvania) 64 Mrs. Gibson, Miss Mariana Hunter, Mrs. Mary Davis, Miss Gerard, Thomas Lecroix, Jane Wade, Mrs. Pickit, Mrs. Heron, Mrs. Laforest and niece, J. Jacobs, Miss Jacobs, Miss A. Boyman, Miss M. Marks, Edward Wanton, junr. two Miss Trouins, Mrs. Gerer, Miss Elliot, Miss Patsey Griffin, Mrs. Moss and daughter; Miss Littlepage, Miss Rebecca Cook, Mrs. Girardin and two children, Miss Margaret Copeland, Miss Gwathmey, Miss Clay, daughter to Mr. Clay, member of congress; Miss Gatewood, Mrs. Thomas Wilson, Wm. Southgate, Mrs. Robert Greenbow, Mrs. Convert and child, Miss Green, Miss C. Raphel; John Welch, a stranger, nephew to Sir A. Pigott, late from England; Margaretta Anderson, Thomas Erazier, Mrs. Jerrod, James Waldon, Mrs. Bosber, Dying; Mr. Williams Carter, and wife; Barack Judah's child; Nuttle Carpenter, Pleasant, a mulatto woman; Nancy Paterson, a woman of colour; Fanny Goff, do.; Betsey Johnson, do. Philadelphia, missing. Supposed to be one hundred and fifty persons burnt and buried in the ruins. Mr. Edwin Harvey, who was miserably burnt, is said to be better, [since dead.] The lady who

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was rescued by the editor of the American Standard, and whom he covered with his coat was Miss Harvey; who died of her burns on Friday.”

[The Common Council of the city of Richmond passed an ordinance on Friday the 27th, appointing committees to attend to the collection and burial of the remains. Ordaining also, that all shops, stores, &c. &c. be shut up for forty eight hours: and prohibiting any public show or spectacle, or any open public dancing assembly within the city, during the term of four months. At a meeting of the citizens, held on the 27th, commissioners were 65 appointed to ascertain the names of the sufferers. Resolved, that Wednesday next be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer; and several other resolutions; for the citizens to wear crape for one month; and appointing commissioners to receive contributions and make such arrangements in concert with a committee from the common council, as may be necessary for erecting the monument designated by an ordinance passed on that day. The committee appointed for the purpose, ordered, that the citizens attend the funeral on the 28th, at 1 P. M. That the following be the order of the procession:—Corpses, clergy, mourners and ladies, executive council, directors of the bank, judiciary, members of the legislature, court of Hustings, common hall, citizens on foot, citizens on horseback.]

The following letter from a gentleman in Richmond, to M. Clay, Esq. a representative from Virginia, in congress, gives an impressive account of the dreadful catastrophe.

“ Richmond, December 27.

Sir —I have a tale of horror to tell; prepare to hear the most awful calamity that ever plunged a whole city into affliction. Yes, all Richmond is in tears; children have lost their parents, parents have lost their children. Yesterday a beloved daughter gladdened my heart with her innocent smiles, today she is in heaven! God gave her to me, and God—yes, it has pleased Almighty God to take her from me. Oh! sir, feel for me, and not for me only; arm yourself with fortitude whilst I discharge the mournful duty of telling you that you have to F2 66 feel for yourself. Yes, for it must be told, you also were the father of an

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amiable daughter, now, like my beloved child, gone to join her mother in Heaven. How can words represent what one night, one hour of unutterable horror has done to overwhelm a hundred families with grief and despair. No, sir, impossible. My eyes beheld, last night, what no tongue, no pen can describe—horrors that no language can represent.—Last night we were all at the theatre; every family in Richmond, or, at least, a very large portion of them, was there; the house was uncommonly full, when, dreadful to relate, the scenery took fire, spread rapidly above, ascending in volumes of flame and smoke into the upper part of the building, whence a moment after, it descended to force a passage through the pit and boxes. In two minutes the whole audience were enveloped in hot, scorching smoke and flame. The lights were all extinguished by the black and smothering vapour; cries, shrieks, confusion and despair succeeded. O moment of inexpressible horror! Nothing I can say, can paint the awful, shocking, maddening scene. The images of both my dear children were before me, but I was removed by an impassable crowd from the dear sufferers. The youngest (with gratitude to heaven I write it) sprang towards the voice of her papa, reached my assisting hand, and was extricated from the overwhelming mass that soon choaked the passage by the stairs: but no efforts could avail me to reach, or even gain sight of the other; and my dear, dear Margaret, and your sweet Mary, with her companions, Miss Gwathmey and Miss Gatewood, passed together and at once, into a happier world. Judge my feelings by your own, when I saw that neither they nor my beloved sister appeared upon the stairs. first one and then another I helped down; hoping every moment to seize the hand of my dear child—but no, no, I was not destined to have that happiness. O to see so, so many amiable helpless females trying to stretch to me their imploring hands, crying “save me, sir; oh, sir, save me, save me!” Oh God, eternity cannot banish that spectacle of horror from my recollection. Some friendly unknown hand dragged me from the scene of flames and death—and on gaining the open air, to my infinite consolation, I found my sister had thrown herself from the upper window and was saved—yes, thanks be to God, saved, where fifty others, in a similar attempt, broke their necks, or were crushed to death by those who fell on them from the same height. Oh sir, you can have no idea of the general consternation—the universal grief that pervades this

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city—but why do I speak of that? I scarcely know what I write to you. Farewell—In haste and in deep affliction.”

Father. I wish at last to come to the point, which I thought my duty to explain to you, my opinion of the nature and effects of stageplays, balls, horse-racing and gambling, but I perceive I must be shorter than I wished, because much time is spent already in my endeavouring to remove your prejudice; for you counted me one of those fanatic and enthusiastic persons, who by their hasty zeal and rashness, are too apt to condemn innocent amusements; or one of those ignorant preachers, who knows nothing hardly but what he has seen at home. I hope by this time, your prejudice 68 against me is removed, and that the short hints I have given you of my endeavours to procure knowledge of the world and religion, to the end of finding out the wonderful works of the Almighty and the right way to serve him, will incline you to give a serious attention to my testimony against those practices, which you have looked upon as innocent amusement. And I hope also, that the consideration of my having looked into the Pagan, Jewish, Mahometan, and Christian religions; and the particular examination I have made, to see whether the protestant religion or the popish is most consistent with truth and common sense; and whether the religion of the church of Rome at present, or the protestant, is likely to produce the greater number of heirs of grace in this world, and heirs of glory in the world to come, and satisfy you that I am not partial in this important business of opposing the vices of the present age.

S. I am satisfied father that you have been very particular, in searching almost every needful source of knowledge, to find out the truth, agreeably to the advice you quoted, *prove all things and hold fast to that which is good*; and I am satisfied also that you are not enthusiastic or partial in your opposition to those things which I counted innocent amusement; but after all, I doubt if you be able to convince me that they are sinful.

F. I hope I shall; for I am afraid that you are in danger of ruining yourself, body and soul, by following such vain and sinful amusements.

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S. I allow you are sincere, and wish my present and eternal happiness, the consideration of which, I hope, will command mine and others' attention, 69 especially the consideration that a child should obey the good advices of his parents.

F. I am ready to shed tears of joy to find you ready to acknowledge your duty, hoping that my admonitions, under the blessing of Heaven, will prove the means of rescuing you from the snares of Satan and this wicked world, and that the despair, which sometimes overwhelms my heart, under a sense of your approving misery, shall be removed and changed into a joyful hope of seeing you turn to the Lord in this world, and shining in glory in the world to come. And if you doubt the possibility of my convincing you that stageplays and gambling, &c. are sinful vices, will you answer me one question?

S. I should, and will, if I can.

F. As you have often attended stageplays, horse-races and card-tables, pray what passed in your mind at that time?

S. Nothing that I know of, but a little sport and making merry, and sometimes a little contention too.

F. Did you never consider it your duty to ponder a little, whether you were doing right by going there or not? Did you not ask yourself sincerely, sometimes, what good such places afforded you, and what better you could be of them.

S. Very little indeed or nothing, though I must confess, that sometimes something ran through my mind, that I should consider, but I felt such a strong inclination after such diversions, made me to judge of them as sudden thoughts below my character as a young man of fortitude and I banished them from my thoughts.

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F. Fortitude of mind is very commendable in pursuing virtue; but my dear son, let me tell you the truth of such sudden thoughts calling you to consider; they were the voice of the understanding and conscience, calling you to consider your ways; therefore you have acted very wrong to banish them. And the strong inclination you felt in yourself to attend stageplays, horseraces, and gambling, was the work of the sinful desire of the will and of the passions; therefore you have acted very wrong to give the reins to those sinful passions, contrary to the voice of the understanding and conscience. You said, you thought it beneath your character, to listen to those sudden thoughts, calling you to consideration; but the real truth is, you have acted beneath the dignity of a man, how much more of a Christian, in allowing yourself to be overruled by sinful passions, the inferior powers of your soul, but have refused to listen, and have suppressed the most noble powers of your soul, the understanding and conscience. It appears you never considered and examined the consequences of such vain amusements; and not only that, but also, you never deliberately examined yourself, concerning the lawfulness of your practice of attending plays, &c. and those sudden thoughts which ran through your mind, calling you to consideration, were undoubtedly the voice of the understanding and conscience, which you endeavoured to suppress and banish. Therefore my dear son, it appears above all dispute, that these practices, which you allowed to be innocent amusements, are sinful in their nature and destructive in their effects. Oh! that you and other youths, would consider that not only plays, horse racing, and gambling, but all sorts of 71 practices and pleasure are sinful if they cannot be attended to, without suppressing the voice of the understanding and the dictates of conscience.

S. I have nothing to say against your arguments but must allow that you are right.

F. I wish to ask another question, hoping that you will give a sincere answer to it How is your mind affected, when coming from such places and afterward?

S. I used to think but very little of the matter.

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F. Likely; but how were you affected, when you were obliged to think?

S. I felt heavy and guilty, or very hard and inconsiderate.

F. I believe you; and I must tell you that a hard and inconsiderate mind is much more dangerous, than a mind conscious of its guilt.

S. How is it so?

F. Because when a man is under a burden of guilt, there is some hopes that he will consider his evil ways and forsake them; but when a man is under the power of hardness of heart and inconsideration of mind, he thinks himself well and safe, when indeed his case is desperate.

S. It might be so; but it is my disposition always to be hearty and merry, and sometimes I have intoxicated myself with liquor, among gay company, to acquire the character of an agreeable merry gamester.

F. Likely indeed; but it is a poor remedy my dear son, for a physician, who instead of applying a proper remedy to a patient afflicted with wounds, takes and intoxicates him with liquor, in order to make him insensible of his pain, until his whole body falls into a state of mortification. If so my 72 son, consider how woeful is your state, in using such means to quench the conviction of your conscience, that you might obtain a merry heart and esteem among your vain companions.

S. I may be wrong; but I always thought a merry and cheerful companion much more agreeable than one who is heavy and sad.

F. True; a merry heart and cheerful disposition are very amiable, and it is our duty to use all lawful endeavours to obtain them; but to be merry in the way of sin and rebellion against God, and that by the unlawful and dreadful means of intoxication is indeed very

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dangerous and miserable. Consider, my son, your lamentable situation, when hardening your heart against the convictions of your own conscience, and turning a deaf ear to all the sincere warnings of your tender parents, friends and ministers of the gospel, and using unlawful means to obtain quietness and joyfulness of mind for a little while in the service of Satan, and consequently must be sorrowful to all eternity.

S. I know not how to hold a farther conversation on this subject; I feel your words like a shower of darts wounding my conscience; I wish you would change the subject.

F. No my son, I should not; remember what I told you, that the understanding and conscience, are the superior powers of the soul and that they should govern the inferior powers of the passions, such as admiration, love and hatred, &c. We might learn this lesson from the heathen philosopher, how much more from the scriptures. So if your passions are touched, your conscience wounded, and fear and horror begin to rise in your mind by hearing my words; consider, there is no danger ⁷³ here; my words will do you no real hurt, though they hurt your feelings; you know, it is better to clear a wound to the very bottom, than to heal it slightly on the face. So it is better to bear patiently with my words, which under the blessing of God may enlighten your mind and convince you of your danger, while the door of mercy is still open.

S. I feel willing to take your advice; but what more have you to say on this subject.

F. I want to explain to you farther, the evil and bad effects of plays, horseraces and gambling?

S. I am willing to give you my best attention.

F. I wish you and all gamblers to consider, that all moral practices and conduct, must come under one of the two following heads, viz. good or evil; and the most general sense, under one of these three; i.e. good, evil, or indifferent. Now, under which of these characters can we rank stageplays, horse-races, puppetshows, masquerades and gambling? If they are

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good, all is well; if indifferent, the case is not very bad, but if they are evil, those who love and practice them are in a dangerous condition.

S. I hope they are good in some sense at least.

F. What sense?

S. To divert the mind.

F. Diverting the mind in vanity and sinful means is not good; I know it is pretended that these vanities divert the mind; but it is but false diversion, counterfeit diversion, and the effects of it is bad and destructive; because it keeps the mind from improving in those subjects, which are capable of diverting the mind with rational, solid, and lasting amusement; and they do disorder the mind and divert it from the most incumbent duties. G

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S. These diversions are good to remove some heavy burden from the mind, and to drive off that disagreeable disorder, melancholy.

F. I know this is pretended; but the question is, are these lawful; besides there are many other ways of removing the burdens of the mind, more useful, and more consistent with our present and eternal happiness; moreover, it is evident, that when the mind is eased in the way you mentioned, it is often attacked again with double violence. What has been said, appears plain from this; the soul of man is immaterial and immortal, and is endowed with spiritual powers and capacities, then the pleasures of sense are infinitely below its nature; are you, my son, not sensible of this by experience?

S. I cannot deny it; but if so, it appears that few possess the right sort of amusements.

F. It is but too true; there are many who are favoured with opportunities of hearing the gospel preached, but wish rather, that they, their relations and families should attend balls, plays, and gambling; for they think they do wise to avoid being disturbed in their

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consciences by the preaching of the gospel. And it is a woeful truth, that these, murder not only themselves, but their relations also; and they murder their souls, which is ten thousand times worse than murdering the body, and woeful shall be their account in the great day of judgment.

S. I must allow these amusements are not good, I hope they are indifferent.

F. They cannot be indifferent neither; the losing or wasting of any portion of our precious time in vain and trifling amusements, at the expense of neglecting ⁷⁵ and hindering our temporal and spiritual duties, cannot be indifferent; then my dear son, they must be evil, and therefore stage-plays, artificial shows, horseraces and gambling, as I presume you must see, are invented by the devil and an evil heart, and are made subservient to the power of darkness, to divert the fallen race of Adam from things of a serious nature, till by and by, they are plunged in endless ruin.

S. If they are so, father, I wish you clearly to show their evil in their nature and effects, for I tremble at the thought that they are evil, and considering how much I have been attached to them, make me wonder at the long suffering of my maker, that he did not call me to judgment in the midst of my folly, and now I am ready to listen to your words, hoping I shall be enabled to forsake every evil way.

F. I hope so my dear son; and I am ready to explain my mind farther, and show that stage-plays, balls, horseraces, puppet shows and gambling are moral, temporal, spiritual and eternal evil. They are immoral, because they have the immoral principles of avarice, pride, covetousness and envy, and their effects are immoderate drinking, cursing, swearing and fighting and abusing of the rational and moral powers of the soul. Precious time is wasted, innocent creatures abused, and all becomes a scene of misery, and all this to please the immoral desires and lusts of the evil heart, assisted by the immoral rule of the evil spirit, in spite of the moral law of God. And undoubtedly they are a temporal evil; for they undoubtedly destroy many temporal blessings, and bring on many temporal evils.

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They waste precious time and property. 76 You well know that play-actors, puppet show masters, winners in horseraces, and in gambling, live in idleness, and often in pride and luxury; therefore they doing their best to have abundance of money to support themselves, and this money they get by unlawful means; and those whom they get this money from, are men like themselves, they are men fond of plays, horseraces, &c. It is unlawful for play-actors gamesters, &c. to receive money in the way they do, and it is unlawful for those whom they receive the money from, to lose their money in that way; because often money is thrown away by them at plays and gambling, while wives and children at home are suffering for want of the conveniences of life, nay, for want of bread. How many tender parents have descended with their hoary heads to the grave with sorrow, by seeing their promising children ruining themselves in gambling? How many amiable wives have received their mortal wounds of sorrow, by seeing their husbands destroy themselves and families by gambling? How many promising youths have impaired their abilities and hindered their progress in learning, by too much delight in these vain and empty amusements? How many have rendered their learning and abilities useless to themselves and the world, as members of society, by diverting themselves with these vanities? Shall I add, that these sinful amusements and wicked practices, do undoubtedly draw down the vengeance of Heaven upon those countries in which they are tolerated. Again, in the third place, these amusements appear to be a spiritual evil; because those who practice them grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and destroy the happiness of their own spirits. 77 Spiritual debts are daily contracted and set down in the book of the demands of divine justice, and in the black book of conscience. Justly I may call them spiritual whoredom, as the idolatry of the Israelites was called whoredom by the Lord. So sinful amusements are the idols of those who are attached to them; those who follow them, depart from God to serve the devil and their own sinful lusts. They depart from virtue to vanity; from consideration to rashness; from a tender conscience to hardness of heart; from prayer, to swearing, cursing, and blasphemy; from meditating on the works, word and perfections of God, to meditate on gambling, and a crowd of vanities; from hearing the preaching of the gospel, to hear foolish and lewd speeches of play actors, the infernal

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noise of swearing and cursing, of horseraces, puppet shows, and gambling; is not this a sufficient proof that these things are a desperate spiritual evil. But again, in the fourth place, if they are a moral, temporal and spiritual evil, they must of course be an eternal evil. It is beyond all dispute that damnation shall be the end of actors on the stage, and gamblers, except they are brought to Jesus by repentance, and true conversion, *because the wages of sin is death*: i. e. eternal separation of the soul from God and happiness forever. Then my son, consider the end of these wicked actions; the service of Satan, is not very pleasant, but his wages are much worse. The way of sin is wide to be sure, and many go along it, but the end of it is dreadful; it leads to the horrid pit of darkness, to the lake of fire and brimstone; to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and all the workers of iniquity shall be sent there, with endless G 2 78 curses on their heads, without any hopes of that salvation which they despised, forever and ever.

S. Are you steadily of that opinion respecting plays and gambling; have you been so for years?

F. Yes, without wavering, since I have made proper inquiry into the case, and have been enabled to form a proper judgment. And after comparing things together, and making inquiry what was right and wrong, what was virtue and vice. And it grieved me at the heart, on coming into this new world, in 1795, to find that those vain and wicked amusements are allowed and used in in this country. When in New-York sometime after, I took notice of a large brick building going on in that city; I inquired what it was for, I was answered it was a theatre or playhouse, this information grieved my heart; it grieved me, to find that New-York was so unfortunate, as to harbour in her bosom that enchanting serpent, to draw the attention of the citizens from the glorious sound of the gospel to pursue after vanities. It appears plain to me that the devil is much pleased with such public amusements, because they answer his purpose very well, to draw the attention of mankind from the things that pertain to their everlasting peace. And as the godly have their private consultations to promote the cause of Christ in their own hearts and in the world, and to pull down the kingdom of darkness and raise up the kingdom of Christ; so the devil has his private

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consultations, at card-tables and tippling-houses, to harden the hearts of sinners and to promote his cause and interest in the world, and to destroy the cause of Christ. And as I humbly think, that I have had the favour of standing on the side of the Lord, against Satan and his coufederates, 79 I am persuaded it is my duty to declare against all those who encourage this sinful practice of plays, &c. are not worthy in this respect to be called Christians, because they promote not the cause of Christ, but on the contrary, the cause of Satan, and I am sorry to say it, the most of them cast the word of God behind their backs.

S. I must allow that; for I have heard many make fun of the bible, as an old book patched up by the art of the devil and of priest-craft.

F. I understand there are many in this country, of the same stamp as those infidels, Hume, Rosseau, Voltaire, and Paine, and many other enemies of the Christian religion.

S. I have heard some praising Paine, as a sensible man; have you seen his books?

F. Yes I have seen too of his books; the Rights of Man and the Age of Reasons and some pamphlets besides.

S. What do you think of that man and his books?

F. I think he was a man of good natural abilities; but it is a pity, after he enlightened mankind to see their temporal rights, he should endeavour so much to darken their minds with respect to their spiritual and eternal rights; and as to his books, I thought the book he entitled the Rights of Man, might be called the Age of Reason, and his book entitled the Age of Reason, the Age of Infidelity, because of the frivolous impudent arguments, and malicious expressions used against the bible.

S. What do you think of the bible father?

F. I think those nations favoured with it, possess a greater treasure than all the gold of Peru, and all the treasure of India, and woe to that man who pays no regard to it. The

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bible is the word of God 80 according to the united testimony of the church of God. Many surprising miracles have been wrought in confirmation of its truth, and wonderful has been the providence of God in defending it from destruction. Its doctrines are spiritual and heavenly, and able to sanctify and comfort the souls of men by the powerful influence of the spirit of God.

S. Do you think that it is really the word of God?

F. Undoubtedly it is the word of God, for it is given by inspiration of God, and those who wrote the several books of the bible, were only the penmen of God: do you think that it is not of divine authority.

S. I cannot say that, but rather think that it is the word of God, and that men should read it with diligence and reverence and follow its directions. But I have a guilty conscience, which condemns me, because I live in rebellion against it, and as there are many of the same character, whom you call infidels, please to mention some of the reasons that induce you to think that the bible is the word of God.

F. I have mentioned a sufficient reason already, and am willing to add some more with pleasure; there are many reasons and more than sufficient; I will only mention a few of them. It appears to have been given by God, because of its antiquity and the harmony of its parts, though written by different persons and in different ages of the world; its harmony is great, though not seen by some blind wise men of the world, and they would say it is full of contradictions; but we may defy them to shew any book so old or comprising so much matter, that is as consistent with itself, as it takes in a space of 81 four thousand years. It has been written in different languages, and by persons of different customs and manners and living far distant from each other. There is in it a wonderful harmony, its scope is altogether against sin, to humble man and exalt the Lord; it is all stamped with marks of holiness and purity, and there is an amazing harmony between its prophecies and their fulfilment. Also, it appears to be God's word, from God's owning of it as such, by

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the surprising effect of it on the consciences of men; many thousands are brought by its divine impressions, to renounce the service of sin and satan, and to walk in newness of life, in this present evil world: It is able to make men wise unto salvation, and to comfort them in troubles and severe trials.

S. I allow what you have said; but as far as I understand, it is said, common sense will not allow the bible to be the word of God.

F. If they would give their reason or common sense fair play, they would find that reason not only allows the bible to be the word of God, but maintains it to be so.

S. How can that be?

F. This comes within the reach of common sense, that there are but three orders of living creatures: beasts, angels and men. Of beasts, we need speak nothing; and now the composing of the scriptures must be ascribed to some of these, men, or angels, or to God. If we say their author is God by angels and men, that is all we say; but if we say that God is not their author, then they must be given by men or angels. Reason or common sense testifies against the idea of their being given by wicked men and wicked angels or devils, for they are far above their capacity, on account of their many prophecies and sublime doctrines; and they are entirely against the nature and interest of wicked men and devils, because they are altogether against sin, and in their effects pull down the kingdom of Satan in the world: their whole scope is against sin and for holiness; therefore, their authors cannot be wicked men and devils. Again, reason bears an equal testimony, that they were not composed by good men or angels, without the permission, command and inspiration of God; for it is equally above their abilities. And contrary to their natures and interest as good and holy beings to give a false testimony; because if they were to write them by the direction of their own spirits, and then say they wrote by the inspiration of the spirit of God, would be a lye and a devilish act in them, and would destroy their natures as holy beings; therefore the scriptures were not dictated by wicked men and devils, nor

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by good men and angels, wherefore God himself is their true author according to the testimony of common sense. Now my dear son, I hope you see that those who deny the scriptures, act not only below common sense, but quite contrary to it.

S. It appears so father; and I am very thankful to you for confirming me in the belief of the holy scriptures, for though I dare not deny them as many do, yet my life was worse than the lives of many who do deny it.

F. Likely; for the devil is cunning enough to choose men of great natural abilities, and a midling moral character, to oppose the truth; for when the devil speaks, he must have a serpent to speak 83 by, but God can speak well and effectually by an ass.

Farewell now my dear son; I hope you will consider what I have told you, and by the blessing of God, may it bring you from darkness to his marvellous light, and when convenient I will converse with you again on the subject.

PART III. REFLECTIONS ON THE CONFLAGRATION OF THE THEATRE IN RICHMOND, DECEMBER 26, 1811.

Son. Good morning father, I wish more conversation.

F. Good morning my son, I am glad te see you so well disposed to continue the conversation upon the important subject of a man's real happiness in this world and in the world to come; and as we find it convenient at last to spend this day in conversation upon the important reflections which did or may arise in your mind from the burning at Richmond. I should be glad to know my son, what reflection you have made upon our last conversation, respecting the evil of stage-plays, masquerades, puppetshows, horseraces and gambling.

S. I humbly thank you father for your concern for me, and to answer your question, I must say that my reflections have been many, and some of them dreadful.

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F. Why my son what was dreadful in them?

S. Dreadful was their impressions upon my mind; I have lost my former relish for those amusements; I have lost my usual attachment to foolish mirth; I am most at a loss how to open my mouth in company, lest some of my old oaths should escape me, to which I have been so much accustomed; for hardly could I speak formerly a dozen words, among my young company, without an oath; I have also lost much sleep. My old friends and companions who used to meet with me at card-tables and tippling-houses, begin to sneer and laugh at me; I know not where to go or what to do.

F. Pleasing news indeed, I am glad to hear.

S. I wonder how such an account can be pleasing to you; however it is very unpleasant to me, I feel very unhappy.

F. I confess you may feel unhappy, but you are happier a thousand times than ever I saw you before.

S. How can that be?

F. When an impenitent sinner feels happy he is very unhappy; and when he feels unhappy on account of his sins, and loses his relish in his former vain amusements, and his old wicked companions begin to sneer at him, then in reality he begins to be happy, and as you said, you know not where to go or what to do, you should go to the throne of grace to pray, Heb. 4. 16.

S. I thought of doing that; but I could not venture it.

F. Why not venture it my son? does not the word of God tell us, *seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near*, Isa. 55. 6. *call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee*, 50. 51. "he that is in distress, let him pray," Jam. 5. 15. the first

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account we have of Paul after his conversion is, *behold he prayeth*, Acts 9. 11. and the poor publican, sensible of his sin and guilt, went and prayed, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner," Luke 18. 13. and the prodigal son when H 86 made alive in a spiritual sense, and was enlightened to see his undone condition, went to his father (the Lord) and said unto him, *father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*, Luke 15. 21.

S. I allow, and I am ready to confess that I am a sinner, but to pray the Lord to be merciful, I dare not, for I think it is too late. I am ready to tell the Lord, I have sinned against Heaven and in his sight, but I dare not call him my father, because I have forfeited his favour and all interest in him; and it is a wonder my dear father you did not count me unworthy of the favour of having any conversation with you. I despised your tender parental advices and admonitions; I had no regard to your fervent prayers for me; I know that you shed many tears of grief and love for my sake, and that my crooked and ungodly life, has cost you many sorrowful watchings during the night. And now I am ready to shed tears, not only on account of my inconsideration and wicked life, but also because that sentiments of tenderness for me, have not yet left your breast.

F. My compassion and concern for you my dear son, is nothing in comparison to the compassion of Jesus Christ towards penitent sinners; he is able and willing to save you.

S. I know that he is able, but I doubt his willingness at this time. I know he was willing once, but I refused his mercy, I trampled on his commandments, despised his word and servants, I suffocated the motions of his Holy Spirit, and my own conscience. I cast his counsels and admonitions behind my back; I turned a deaf ear to his invitations and threatenings; I refused to listen to his 87 voice when he called me; and now how can I expect he should listen to my voice calling on him. I am sensible that Jesus did stand long at the door of my heart knocking, but I have bolted up my heart against him with these bolts: ignorance, inconsideration, presumption, and hardness of heart. The words of God, by Solomon, rend my heart and afflict my soul at this time: *because I have called*

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you and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as the whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they will not find me. For they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsels, they hated all my reproof, Prov. 20. Many cry out in anguish that the harvest of salvation is over, and the summer of gospel invitation is ended. *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despiseth reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me,* Prov. 5. 12, 13. Oh that I could call back the time past, but never, never can, nor any one else. I have wasted my precious time in playhouses, at horseraces, and at card-tables; have profaned the holy sabbaths of the Lord, and with my sinful companions, have ran on swiftly in the road that leads to eternal ruin. And woe to me, that I have sinned against the Lord, and despised my maker, hardened my heart against the invitation of his dear son Jesus, and turned a deaf ear to his tender voice. Oh that I could be favoured once more with gracious invitations; but oh, never, never can I recover the time that is past.

F. Who told you my dear son that it is too late; the Lord sheweth mercy at the eleventh hour; our dear Saviour saved the thief on the cross, when at the point of death, and will save you if you believe; believe and thou shalt be saved, Acts 16. 31.

S. Oh! that I could believe, I would prefer it to ten millions of worlds in all their glory. When the Lord was willing to give me faith, I despised it; now, when my dreadful case appears full in my view in all its horrors, I wish to have faith to believe in Jesus, but cannot obtain it, and it is justly kept from me, though I wish to have it.

F. Likely you have faith; what can that desire of believing be but faith itself? You have the principle of faith deeply rooted in your soul, though the acts and comforts of it are suppressed by darkness, fears and despair. You complained that you bolted your heart

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against Christ, with the bars of wilful ignorance, presumption, hardness of heart and unbelief, but now Jesus forced the door open, and cast out the strong man armed, and his light has shone through your heart, take care now my son, not to shut your heart again against your blessed Redeemer by unbelief. You are a suitable sinner to be saved; you are stripped of all, that you might be clothed with Christ's righteousness; you have lost your former relish in vain amusements, that you might relish virtue; you are made sensible of the mortal wounds of sin, that you might be willing to come to Christ, the infallible physician: he himself said, *he did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and that the whole have no need of a physician, but the sick*, Matt. 9. 12, 13. and he father says, *he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*; therefore my dear son, hear his merciful voice, "come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. 11.28. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," John 7, 37. "And he that cometh to me, I will by no means cast out," John 6. 37.

S. I wish to come if I could, but when I attempt to come to the throne of grace, and to believe on Christ, I dare not; I am discouraged and pressed back by the voice of my guilty conscience, which says I am too much of a sinner to be saved; I should not pray, God will not hear me, and that it is too late.

F. That is the trick of your old master the devil; he is cast out from your heart as I told you, and you have rejected his service; then he does his best to discourage you from taking Jesus to be your Saviour and Lord, by saying he will not receive you; he is knowing enough to make use of your guilty conscience, to discourage you and to drive you to despair if he can. When you were in his service, he persuaded you it was too early to begin to be religious then, too soon to pray and seek salvation; that might easily be done in time of sickness, or on a death bed; that the Lord was very merciful and there was no need to fear; but now, after you have left his service, all is undone, all is over, there is no mercy for you, it is too late. When you were in his service, he used to tell you that you were but a small sinner, and it was very easy for you to obtain mercy; but now he says that H 2 90 you are a very great sinner and too wicked to find mercy. With him, it is always too

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soon or too late; he represents God to the fallen race of mankind, as all mercy, or without any mercy; and sin as too small to need pardon, or too great to obtain it: he always keeps the plough on the surface of presumption, or in the depth of despair, to prevent the field of soul, to bear fruit to God and salvation. By fraud, craft, and misrepresentation, he obtained his kingdom, and by the same means he maintains it, as expressed by Dr. Watts:

Thus he supports his cruel throne
By mischief and deceit, And drags the sons of Adam
down To darkness and the pit.

Therefore my dear son, cast yourself as you are, at the mercy-seat of free grace, as the chief of sinners, and our great High Priest will dispute your cause with Satan; he obeyed and suffered for you, and by his perfect obedience and ignominious death, he hath rendered full satisfaction to all the demands of divine justice on your part; receive then the free pardon offered in the gospel; these terrors of darkness and anguish of mind, shall be followed by a glorious morning of spiritual light and consolation. I pray you to compose your mind and give me a regular and particular account of the reflections which wrought upon your mind, by my late conversation with you, upon the burning of the theatre at Richmond.

S. Yes my father, I will give you a relation of the most important reflections which have passed in my mind, and which at last had the most powerful impressions upon my heart. The first thing which affected my mind, was what you told me of Jesus Christ, that he is a friend that loveth at all times, and is a brother born for adversity, Prov. 17. 17. The great calamity of the unfortunate at Richmond came to my mind, and though I did not think of their spiritual danger, I thought that such a friend would be very desirable, especially in such distressing cases. It came into my mind that I had often read and heard of Jesus, but that I never knew him, and that because of my wilful negligence and inconsideration; I thought he often looked at me and offered to save me, but I was unconcerned and refused his grace; and when he stood at the door of my heart, I barred my heart against him. Then it came into my mind that you and I were of different opinions respecting plays, gambling,

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&c. and it powerfully struck my mind, that you were right and myself wrong; that I had endeavoured to support the wrong side, against the voice of reason and conscience; that I had listened to the flatterings of my wicked heart and lustful desires, and I refused as long as I could to be enlightened. Especially it wounded my heart, by reflecting on my prejudice against you and all of your stamp. Oh! how powerful an enemy is prejudice against the truth. I think, to be sure, that my attachment to vain diversions was so much, and my prejudice against religion so great, that if Christ and his apostles were upon earth, my prejudice against them would be more than my prejudice against his present people, as I suppose they were more holy, spiritual and heavenly. I found that the more shining professors should be, and the more conformable to the bible, the greater would be my prejudice against them, though I might show a tolerable civility in their presence. And at that time I counted them most all hypocrites, and thought my heart was almost as good as theirs, though my life was not as regular. But now I know better; I wish all the enemies of religion could see the change that has taken place in my heart in this respect. Then it came into my mind, of the miserable state of the heathen idolaters; the foolishness of the religion of the impostor Mahomet, and the dreadful condition of the Jews for their unbelief, and the human institutions and ceremonies, and the superstitious worship of the church of Rome. The consideration of this pierced my heart that I was favoured with the means of knowledge, of the true and living God, and that the light of the gospel shone around me, and I a wretched sinner walked in darkness, in the midst of all these privileges. The words you quoted at the beginning of our conversation, “ *this is the condemnation,* ” &c. entered my heart with power; I reflected, this is my true character, I loved darkness more than light; and undoubtedly this is the character of all my fellow-gamblers, and of all the play-actors, &c. they love to live in the darkness of sin rather than come to the light of the gospel.—They love to serve Satan the prince of darkness, rather than the pleasant and profitable service of Christ, the prince of light. The consideration of this made me sink into unutterable distress and guilt. All my sins and wicked practices came into my view, as a formidable army of enemies, ready to destroy me; in time past they flattered, and I was ready to entertain them in my bosom, and I embraced and served them with

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all my might, with 93 body and mind. But now I understood I was rather deceived; I took those to be my friends, who in fact were my most deadly enemies. What you said some time ago came into my mind, that a wicked man has no friend in heaven, earth or hell; the ungodly cannot be counted friends to each other, because they are the means of each other's destruction; good men and angels cannot be their friends, because he lives in sin; God in heaven cannot be his friend, for *God is angry with the wicked every day*, Ps. 7. 11. and a sinner is an enemy to himself, and like a madman, he seeks his own destruction, by using dangerous weapons and drinking poison. At that time, your words had but very little effect, but now I feel the truth of them. The devil is the great enemy of souls, and though I have served him so faithfully, and have listened to his old lye as Eve did in Paradise, *ye shall not die*, now I know that death is my portion, except the arm of mercy shall pluck me as a brand out of the burning, and if hell shall be my lot, have no doubt but that, as you have sometimes said, he will then upbraid me for my folly in serving him. Another deep reflection arose in my mind, from the questions you put to me so closely, as, what was passing in my mind? did I ever ask myself seriously? Also, it arose from the manner in which you showed, I had given the reins, to my lusts against the voice of reason and conscience; and the bad effects of the vanities, was an undeniable proof of their sinfulness. When all these reflections arose in my mind, I saw plainly that plays, gambling, &c. were neither good nor indifferent; but evil, yea, morally, temporally, spiritually and eternally evil, as you explained them; and I tremble yet under this reflection, expecting 94 daily the vengeance of God to be poured on my guilty head, and myself to be cast down to the deepest hell, accordingly as I have deserved. Likely if the vain and inconsiderate gamblers, heard my present testimony, they would count me under some enthusiastic impression, even as I counted others when I went on in the way of sin with infernal boldness; but now I know better by experience; and wish the scoffers of religion might consider their ways and feel their misery before it is too late, as I have, though I am afraid it is too late with me.

F. I may assure you my dear son it is not too late; you shall find the rays of the sun of righteousness shining upon you after this stormy night. What you have said of inconsiderate, hard hearted workers of iniquity, that they would be ready to say of your religious impressions, that they are enthusiastic fancies; I have seen many such in my days, and they are ready to think themselves above such feelings; and if they should happen to find their minds beginning to entertain such thoughts, they would try every way but the fight way to get rid of them; as if they would rather suffer the wrath of God in hell eternally, than to suffer the convictions of conscience, for a little while upon earth, in order that they might be drawn and delivered from sin. But have you had no more reflections?

S. I have had many more; but one very remarkable, which I will never forget; which was, the different light in which I considered those who perished at Richmond and those who so narrowly escaped. Formerly, I considered nothing but their outward and temporal calamity, but now I consider 95 their spiritual and eternal case. Upon the whole, my reflection on that subject, has been very affecting; how awfully sudden were many seized by the fire, and how narrowly did others escape; how shocking was the pain to be burned alive in consuming flames; but now I consider how sudden was the transit; hurried in a moment from this world to the next, from time to eternity, from the stage of action to the bar of judgment! Respecting those who received the sudden summons, I have nothing to say, I knew but few of them; but by considering the place and the vain amusement they followed, I tremble to think of the condition of their souls, for I think, had I made up one of the number, my portion this day had been in hell among the damned. Oh! how miserable my change had been, being removed from a state of rebellion against God, to a state of punishment under the mighty hand of his anger; from this world where I have transgressed his law, and despised his gospel, to the other world to give an awful account; from the slavish service of Satan to receive his miserable wages; from the playhouse to the prison of hell; from the fire which consumed only my body, to the fire of hell or a lake of fire and brimstone which shall be burning my soul and body forever; *the fire shall not be quenched and the worm shall never die*, Mark 9. 44. Formerly I thought those who escaped and

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were made the trembling spectators of the dreadful scene, to be more unhappy than those who perished, on account of their continued sorrow for their relations; and this would be the case if the end of a man were like that of a beast, but oh, man is immortal! he must reap in the next what he sowed in this world. Oh how 96 thankful I should be, that I was not there; that I was not removed to eternity by so dreadful a dispensation; and how thankful should those be that escaped, that that fire did not remove them to eternal burnings. Also, the burning at Richmond brought into my mind, some idea of the terrors of the day of judgment; if the burning of one house full of people was so dreadful, it had been much more dreadful if the whole city of Richmond had been on fire, nay if all the cities and towns in the whole state had been on fire, Oh how dreadful! but this would be a mere trifle, in comparison to the general conflagration of the great day of judgment, when *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up*, 2 Pet. 3. 10. The suddenness of the scene also had great effect upon my mind; the day of judgment will come upon men when they least expect it, and will put an effectual stop to the sinful careers of men, and will turn all the works of nature and art into an undistinguished heap of smoaking desolation. Again, the screaming of those who perished in the play-house was great, but how dreadful shall it be, when men of all ranks and conditions will rend the very heavens, with their cries in the midst of their wild consternation, wishing to be crushed by the weight of rocks and mountains, rather than appear before the tremendous throne of judgment. Oh, how can I appear before the judge of all, at that day, if my sins be not pardoned, and my soul be not reconciled to God, when Christ will come on the clouds of heaven in all his glory, to render to every one according to his works. I can add nothing more, my spirit fails. Oh dear father pray 97 for me once more; I hate my sins, and myself on their account; I wish to love Jesus and to have all my sins pardoned, and be enabled to spend the remainder of my time to the glory of him, who called me out of darkness into his marvellous light: nothing but the light of God shining into my soul, could make such an alteration in my judgment and feelings.

F. If so my dear son, all is well; your mourning ere long, shall be turned into joy. Concern for your soul, made me pray often for you; but now I can pray for you with inexpressible pleasure. If you cannot pray for yourself with boldness of faith, cast yourself as you are before the throne of grace; continue there in your mind in the use of the means of grace, until you feel the spirit of adoption enabling you to cry abba, father; this is worth waiting for till death. But as the change made in you by grace is so remarkable, I am confident that your consolation also shall be remarkable. I am surprised at the powerful work of grace, which appears to be wrought in you by these diverse reflections you mentioned. I thought to have made some reflections on the burning at Richmond, hoping that by the blessing of God, they would be the means of your conviction and conversion; but I see to my unutterable joy, that God himself has brought reflections into your mind by the spirit of his grace, in order that you might be an heir of grace here, and an heir of glory hereafter; blessed be his name forever and ever. Amen. I

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APPLICATION.

Father. Good morning my dear son; I hoped to see the day long also, in which I was to make an application of the subject of our conversation, to people of every description, especially to youths. But before I attempt that important business, I wish to hear how Jesus by his spirit, has applied the sweet promises in his word to your soul; for I perceive by your serious countenance, mixed with heavenly cheerfulness, that you have experienced something of their sweetness: have you any thing to say on that subject?

S. Yes, I have a good deal to say concerning how the Lord hath dealt with my soul.

F. Did you soon partake of the joy of salvation after we parted?

S. I had great satisfaction that the blood of Christ was sufficient to cleanse me from all sin, 1. Jo. 1. 7. within a few days after, and was enabled to rely on his atonement, but I met

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with many inward trials, before I was favoured with the experience of the peace and joy of salvation in the gospel which passeth knowledge. Eph. 3. 19.

F. I would be glad to hear you relate how it has been with you.

S. I will relate with pleasure, for I longed to see you dear father, that I might tell you the trials and comforts of my soul.

F. How was it with you?

S. In the first place, I was enabled to take your advice, to cast myself as I was at the feet of Jesus, and instead of being cast out as I always feared; I found the invitation, “ *come to me,* ” &c. applied to my afflicted soul, and then I found that whosoever 99 came, was not cast out, Jo. 6. 37. and by these portions of scripture applied to my mind, I was enabled to resolve to trust in the Lord all the days of my life; but when I was middling comfortable and was resolving to cleave to the Lord and his people, in public worship and private conversation, and found my heart ready to praise him that I was not cast off, and that he enabled me to wait for him by the application of his word now and then to my soul; a very great and terrible storm arose and broke over my head, and shook as I thought, all the foundations of my hope and consolation, which was a temptation causing me to doubt the truth of God's word.

F. I think you said you did not doubt the authority of God's word, while you pursued the vanities of a wicked life.

S. I believe not, but rather, I paid some secret regard to it, but at the same time I was quite careless of the truths revealed in it. I know that many of my fellow wicked companions, made a mockery of the bible, especially after they had been encouraged by Thomas Paine's book, entitled Age of Reason, which has spread through our country.—Likely that Satan at that time, observed my carelessness about the word of God; that I devoted myself entirely to his own service, that I derived no benefit from the bible, therefore he

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was careless about my vain seeming belief in it; he knew such a belief was no better than none.

F. True, Satan is a great observer of our disposition and of the frames of our minds and he knows how to suit his baits and temptations accordingly; but tell me my son, how this storm of doubting arose in your mind?

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S. It began accidentally in some sense; I happened to meet one of my old wicked companions, who made fun of me for stuning their amusements, plays, horseraces, &c. I left him alone without saying a word to him, till he laughed at me and said I had'nt a word to say for myself; then I told him I had a word to say for myself and for him too, i. e. "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," &c. 2 Cor. 5. 10. then he laughed and said, Oh! you begin to read and quote the bible; would you become a preacher? You are foolish enough to give credit to that old book. I felt myself deeply wounded, at the same time I greatly pitied his condition, and sometime after I remembered him at the throne of grace and prayed the Lord to enlighten him as he had done me, that he might see the miserable state of his soul, and then when about to thank the Lord for his mercy in enlightening me, this strange unsuspected temptation rushed into my mind, of doubting the truth of the bible, and that I was foolish enough to think I was enlightened, when it was nothing but a mere fancy, and that religion was nothing, and that it was better to turn back again to my old companions, than to be scorned by them for my foolish and unprofitable fancies. I cannot express the strength and force of the temptation; it rushed upon me for days together, but I was enabled to bear up against it, and I found some portions of scripture applied to my mind, which enabled me to stand this sore conflict with Satan. I found also, the proofs you gave me of the authority of the scriptures of great use in this engagement, especially the wonderful power and effects of the scriptures upon the minds and consciences of men. 101 This proof was realized to me; I felt the power of the word of

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God and do feel it still, therefore I said, get behind me Satan, thou father of lies; thou hast deceived me long enough, I will never return to thy service again, whatever becomes of me; then after representing the many hazards and trials I had to expect in my way, without prevailing, I thought he fled with shame and would never return again.

F. Likely the devil was enraged, because you quoted that portion of the scripture, *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*, &c. but what became of the man who was the first occasion of this sore conflict?

S. I hope the words I spoke to him stuck in his mind; he tried many ways to get rid of them, but he could not, they still sounded in his ears, and pierced his heart, *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*, till at last he was obliged to cry out, *what shall I do to be saved?* He humbly desired to be admitted into our prayer-meeting, and has now publicly joined with the church.

F. No wonder Satan uses his malicious and artful schemes against the bible, for it is often the means, yes the most common effectual means of destroying his kingdom from time to time; but I can hardly believe that Satan would leave you in such an abrupt manner without returning again.

S. Oh, he did not leave me long; he soon returned with double force; he rushed upon me with persuasions and compulsions; he cast into my mind many blasphemous thoughts against God, and then upbraided me for them as if they had been my own; he charged me with blasphemy against God and sinning against the Holy Ghost, which threw 12 102 my mind into entire confusion and filled my soul with astonishment and horror; but I was enabled to cast myself as I was at the throne of grace, and found the bible again (which I used to read now often with much attention) a great support and consolation under these trials; and I found also, that reading the works of pious authors, especially authors on experimental religion, was of great use and support to me in my conflicts with Satan. Especially once, when I was tempted to think I had sinned the unpardonable sin;

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fearing this, I was in great horror of mind, and thought that heaven and earth and all that in them is, frowned upon me, and that hell was open, ready to receive and swallow me alive; I found in a book, treating of the unpardonable sin, these words, "if thou dost fear thou hast sinned this sin, and desirest not to have done it if thou hadst a choice, then thou hast not sinned this sin, for those who are guilty of it, are given up to hardness of heart and hatred against God." Now all my darkness was dispelled, by the rays of the sun of righteousness; and life and immortality appeared in such a glorious view, that my spirit was transported with sweet experience of soul and of the redeeming love of Jesus, which was now shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost. The unconditional promises of the gospel were presented so gloriously to my view, that I was enabled to embrace the conditional promises and to take the commandments of my great Lord as the rule of life and to walk in them with pleasure, and my thoughts were sweetly fixed on the truths of revelation. I sweetly experienced the filial fear of sonship, wrought in me by the spirit of adoption; all my doubts and slavish fear fled away; now I could call God my father; I know that he quickened me when I was dead in trespasses and sins. I know that he hath received me into his family by adoption; that he hath clothed me with the best robe, the righteousness of Jesus; I know that he hath set a gold ring of glorious relationship upon my hand, and the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace upon my feet, and I feast on the fatted calf; and I begin to sing the song of joy which shall never end.

F. I have not words my son to express the pleasure which filled my heart, by hearing you relate the wonderful goodness of God in his dealing with your soul; how he enabled you to resist and conquer Satan in all his attempts, and how he hath filled your soul with the joy of his salvation; and now I wish to say a few important words by way of application.

1. Never forget your low and miserable state, nor the infinite love and goodness of God, who by his free grace, plucked you out as a brand from the burning; always to walk humbly and thankfully.

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2. Do not think that you are safe from your enemies on this side heaven; therefore watch and pray that you may not fall into temptation; you were enabled to make a glorious resistance and gained a notable victory; but do not think that you have destroyed your enemies; Satan will yet go about as a roaring lion, and often as a fox or wolf in sheep-skin, he will watch you and you should always watch him; remembering also that you have a wicked heart, therefore don't trust in yourself; many idols may set themselves up in your affection, therefore remember my dear son, 104 that you should set your affections upon things above and not on things below; let your treasure be in heaven.

3. Remember that you are yet in the wilderness; the Israelites sang sweetly after passing over the red sea and were delivered from the hands of the Egyptians, but after that they travelled many crooked ways, before they reached the land of Canaan. Many trials may yet meet you before you reach the promised paradise; many times perhaps you must drink of the bitter waters of Marah; therefore don't promise yourself much happiness in the wilderness of this world, and don't be discouraged under heavy trials and disappointments; resign yourselves and all your concerns to the Lord, the wise disposer of all events; and in the path of duty never forget the advice of our Saviour to his disciples, "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Be not willing to spend one day without some particular fellowship with Jesus in your heart, and keep the heavenly Canaan always in view by an eye of faith, that you may travel cheerfully to it as a pilgrim and stranger on earth. And now my dear son, as my only motive in opposing plays, masquerades, puppet shows, horseraces and gambling, was some hope, that under the blessing of God, I might be the means of saving you and some others, from being eternally ruined by these sinful vanities; I will therefore proceed to make a close and sincere application of the subject to people of all descriptions, especially to youth.

1. To all my fellow travellers to the eternal world. Bear with me while I address you in the words of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, 1. 5. "Consider your ways." Rational creatures should be 105 considerate creatures; consider what you are, who you are, and where

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you are going to, and where you will be this day a hundred years. Inconsideration is the gap, through which many dreadful evils come in. Consideration is the first step towards happiness, and so inconsideration is the first step towards destruction. Oh, therefore consider your duty and advantages; consider in time. Consider the worth and uncertainty of your time; you cannot recall one moment of it; what is past, is past forever; therefore don't spend present time in vanity and trifling. Consider that eternity has no end, therefore labour to be happy in that endless world.—Consider there is no happiness to be found, but by being at peace with God and with your own conscience. All this world is but a scene of misery since the fall of our first parents; and were it possible for you to obtain all the happiness this world can afford, consider how short would be its duration, and that you have an immortal soul, the nature and capacity of which are not to be made easy and happy by this world. Are you in the land of light, and yet refuse to be enlightened in the things belonging to your everlasting peace. Does Jesus Christ call upon you by his word and servants, to come and be saved, and will you refuse your own salvation. Will you pay attention to the foolish and lewd speeches of play-actors on the stage, who perhaps, together with you may be consumed in the flames of burning play-houses, and afterwards in eternal flames of hell? Will you turn away from the sound of the silver trumpet of the gospel, proclaiming the jubilees of glorious liberty, through Jesus the Saviour of souls from a state of condemnation, and from eternal damnation? Will you feed your eyes upon unlawful spectacles, I mean horseraces; not considering that their riders and the vain spectators, run a swifter race to hell. Let those who ride horses in this way, though driving them as fast as they can, consider that Satan rides in their hearts, and drives them to hell, swifter than their nimble horses carry them over the ground. Will you look upon puppet shows, &c. and refuse to look upon the wonderful works of creation and providence of God? Will you refuse to look into the bright glass of the word of God, in which you may see your own pictures, nay the pictures of your hearts? In this glass you may see what you are, who you are and where you are going to, and where you shall be in the other world. Yea in a word, in this glass, you may see (by an eye of faith,) numerous wonders unutterable, which would give you unspeakable pleasure and joy; which would amuse your

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minds in this world and support you in death, and bring you to everlasting joy in the world to come. Therefore consider your latter end that your heart may be applied to wisdom.

2. *To play-actors, &c.* I suppose I must allow that you are men, who employ your minds in much consideration, to find out means of amusing yourselves and others; how to rise high enough on the wings of vanity in this world without considering that your sinful plays and imitations will sink you deep enough into hell in the next. Permit me to ask you one question; have you ever considered how vain and empty in reality, are all your admirable curiosities and vain shows? Have you ever considered that you must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give account, not only 107 for your own sins but for the sins of others also, of which you have been the occasion, by seducing them from the ways of virtue to vanity; and sometimes have been the means of drawing them to be tormented and burnt in the fire, as in Richmond and in many other places before? You consider yourselves as nimble and active, and so you are, but let me tell you, the old serpent is more witty, more nimble and active than you; he secures you and others by vain amusements, in his strong net, and he loads you with heavy chains, until he shall have an opportunity of feeding his eyes on your torments in the bottomless pit, as he does now upon your vanity. You are curious indeed!! you make men and devils laugh at the same time; men laugh at your vain curiosities, shows, &c. and devils laugh with infernal pleasure, at the foolish actors, &c. and men, your foolish spectators and admirers; and are highly pleased to see you together wasting precious time in so vain and sinful a manner. It would be better for you and for the country too, if heads of government would put a stop to your career, and make you apply yourselves to more honourable and useful employments, or if they would confine you to prevent your going about to rob people of their time and property, to bring them under the judgments of heaven.

3. *To parents and heads of families.* Your situation is critical and of great importance; you are to act here and to give an account hereafter, not only for yourselves, but those also placed under your care. The present virtue and usefulness, and future happiness of your children and servants depend much on your directions, admonitions and behaviour.

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You are happily favoured with the 108 most valuable and extensive means of knowledge; the laws of our land are well framed to encourage virtue and suppress vice, and are as favourable to the low and poor as to the high and rich. You have the law of reason and conscience in your bosom, and above all, you have divine revelation, (the bible) and the preaching of the gospel, except by your own fault, you despise and neglect them. Pay more attention, and be more active in rising the youth as useful members of society, and be more careful to make them attentive in domestic concerns, than in the arts of politeness and show, according to the vain and empty fashion of the age. Remember that true politeness consists in usefulness and a virtuous behaviour. You are warned by a dreadful example to keep yourselves and families from sinful amusements and from puppetshows and play-houses; remember the branches of families who miserably perished at the burning in Richmond. Likely some of you are destitute of true happiness in your enjoyments, and that because you are destitute of religion or true *godliness which is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1. Tim. 4. 8. *and godliness with contentment is great gain*, chap. 6. 6. Oh, that you would but consider the necessity and worth of family worship; of acknowledging the goodness of your Maker, of confessing your offences before him and of humbly asking his pardon, and of committing yourselves and families to his care and keeping with thankfulness. If then any of your children or family would not take your direction and admonition, and would not follow your good example, their blood shall be on their own heads.

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4. *To professors of Religion.* Dear brethren, to whatever denomination you belong, remember that the king of Zion is the searcher of all hearts, and the prover of all reins. A name of living by a profession, while we are dead, will not do in the hour of death and the day of judgment; we should have the oil of grace, as well as the lamp of profession.

Counterfeit religion, outward or inward, is very dangerous; our faith should be consistent with and supported by the word of God, and our conduct should be worthy of our

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profession, *we should live soberly, justly and godly, in this present evil world*, Tit. 2. 12. *We should not be conformed with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*, Eph. 5. 11. Are stage-plays, and gambling, &c. not a part of the works of darkness? Are they not the assemblies of the king of darkness? Why then should the children of light, the disciples and soldiers of Christ, the prince of light attend them? Why do any of you act so inconsistently with your profession, as to join with them who are yet under the power of darkness, to hold up and promote the Cause of the prince of darkness in the world. Is not the character of those who attend plays, &c. directly opposite to the character Christ has given of the Church upon earth, when he said, “ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid,” Matt. 5. 13, 14. Can you join with those wicked assemblies, who have no regard for religion, but who rather make a mock of it? Can you join with them in wasting your precious time, and neglect your domestic concerns and family worship, and grieve the Spirit of K 110 God; make your pious ministers and brethren in Christ weep at your misconduct, and bring guilt on your own consciences. I wish that you would read again and again, with due attention and consideration, the words of Paul the apostle to the church of Christ at Rome, *I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service—And be not conformed with this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*, Rom. 12. 1, 2. Let the world laugh at you as professors of religion and disciples of Jesus, but give them no occasion to laugh at you as traitors to your profession. *If they hate and reproach you for not running with them to the same excess of riot speaking evil of you*, 1 Pet. 4. 4. *Rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. Happy are ye*, said our Lord to his disciples, *if the world hate you, you know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*, John 15. 18, 19. Again, “blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye

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when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven," Matt. 5. 10—12. "Therefore, dear brethren, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. And shew forth the 111 praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," Eph. 6.1. 1 Pet. 2. 9.

5. *To the ministers of the gospel.* Dear brethren and fathers in the gospel of Christ, what should I say to you? I presume you know your duties better than I can tell you; but the consideration that you wish to be faithful in the work of the ministry, induces me to believe that you will be very willing to bear with me, while I remind you of your duties, hoping that by the blessing of God, it may be a means of exciting your zeal in the service of your great master and Lord. I beg leave to remind you all, of whatever denomination you are, of the duties of your important office. The glory of God, the value of souls, and the strict account you must give of your stewardship, as stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, should stir up your minds to consider what you are about. Are you watchmen on the wall of Zion; will you not blow the trumpet when the church and state are in danger? Do you see the world lying in wickedness around you, and will you live in case and unconcern of the dreadful situation of sinners. Are there no Boanergeses or sons of thunder among you, who can blow the thundering trumpet of Mount Sinai, to make some of those who are asleep in trespasses and sins, to rouse up sleepy formal professors and to sweep away the refuge of lies; the refuge of those that trust in their superstitious forms and self-righteousness; that then the silver trumpet of mount Zion, proclaiming the spiritual jubilee may be welcomed. The wise of this world are busy in their invention and craft against religion; hell is busy to find out and employ arts to draw the attention 112 of mankind from virtue to vanity; from the things pertaining to their everlasting peace, to admire the vanities of stage-plays, puppet shows and gambling. Ambitious men of the world are busy in obtaining a great name and great estates. Misers are busy in getting as much of the world as they can, at the expense of losing their souls. Men of pleasure are busy in stupifying themselves with drink, whores and lewd company. Death is busy in snatching

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many from time to eternity. The hand of Providence is unceasingly employed in bestowing benefits upon us. Poor and industrious people are busy in providing for themselves and their families a livelihood in the world, while they are ignorant and unconcerned of the world to come, and that partly on account of your drowsiness and sloth. Oh dear sirs, are all busy but you? Do all seek the interest of their masters but yourselves? though none have more occasion and encouragement to be industrious and faithful than you have. Have so many military officers in every age of the world, denied themselves the ease and pleasure they might enjoy, in order to oppose the enemies of their sovereigns and to enlarge their dominions? And will you then not deny yourselves and exert your zeal, against the enemies of your great Lord and master, Christ, and to enlarge his dominions in the hearts of men and in the world. Are the servants of Satan so artful and industrious to deceive mankind and lull their rational senses with vain and sinful amusements, as plays, &c. and will you not exert yourselves, in the power of the Spirit of God, to shew sinners their dreadful state; that they are under the condemnation of divine justice and slaves 113 to sin and Satan; and draw their attention to admire the infinite love of God the Father, in sending his son into the world; the perfect obedience and meritorious sufferings of Christ, and free salvation through him; the effectual application of the redemption to believing sinners by the influence of the Holy Spirit. O dear brethren, leave off all perverse disputing with each other, as most dangerous in preventing the success of the gospel, and unite your effort against Satan, sin and the vain world.—Remember the kind reproof of the beloved St. John by our dear Saviour, for the narrowness of his spirit towards those who were doing miracles in the name of Christ, but did not follow the apostles. Jesus said, “forbid him not, for he who is not against us, is on our side,” Luke 9. 39, 50. The cause of Christ should be your cause; if any of you wish to excel, Christ is ready to own your labour, if you wish it in the right way, i. e. by praying more, preaching better, and living more holy than others. Furnish the table with the rich provisions of the gospel, then you may expect many guests to come and partake of the marriage feast of the Lamb. Are you pastors over the flock of Christ, to direct and lead them, to watch over them and to feed them with the bread and water of life. Are you ambassadors for Christ, to entreat sinners

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to be reconciled to God; is the word of reconciliation committed to you? Oh then be faithful to your trust. Be active and diligent in the service of your great Lord and master; preach the word, be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. Do not look and aim at your own ease, profit or honour. Do not seek the great K2 114 things of this world; but seek to gain men to Christ and salvation through him; endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ; warring not after the flesh, nor with carnal weapons, but with such as are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and casting down imaginations and subduing every thought and affection to the obedience of Christ.—I know that many of you may say by experience, that your lord and master Jesus is as good as his promise, giving strength according to the day; wherefore renew your zeal and activity in his glorious cause. His promise of being with you to the end of the world, shall be made good. Though you are but earthen vessels in yourselves, yet in you is the treasure of grace, spiritual knowledge, wisdom and power, that God by you might command the light to shine out of darkness. To shine into the hearts of men, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; that the excellency of this wonderful power of turning sinners from darkness to his marvellous light, might be of God and not of man. Be not discouraged, though your labours for some time in the vineyard of Christ may not be attended with much success. Stay and be faithful in the house of the Lord, during the night season of trials and declension. The gracious sun of righteousness, in due season, will rise to its meridian. The light of the gospel broke out at Jerusalem, and chiefly kept a western course. After circulating through Palestine and Syria; it went a little northward, and shone strongly into the Lesser Asia, Pontius Galatia, Capadocia, Armenia, Bythynia, Myssia, Phrygia, Lydia, Pamphylia, &c. and in that country where 115 the seven churches of Asia, which are now almost covered with Mahometanism. A glimpse of the gospel light, shone also into Persia, Tartary, China, and India, but it soon left these large countries and took its course westward, crossed the Archipelago or Ægean sea, and visited many islands about there, and it shone into the states of Greece in Europe; Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, Thrace, Achaia, Crete, &c. It entered into Hungary, Bohemia, Italy, Poland, Germany, Venice, Switzerland, France,

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Spain, Portugal, and to the Isles of Britain and Ireland, to Sardinia, Cilicia, and Corsica. In some years after, the gospel spread her light into Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Russia: it left behind most all Africa. Again it shone to the westward, and crossed the great Atlantic ocean about 200 years ago, and clothed some of the naked Indians in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of Christ. If I may be allowed to conjecture, the bright light of the gospel shall yet proceed farward to the west and to the southwest; and the inhabitants of South America, ere long, shall hear the sound of the gospel, through all her extensive plains; and from there it may proceed to the east through the lands of Jesso, and the sun of righteousness shall rise again on the large countries of the eastern world, and visit again old Jerusalem, when the fulness of the gentiles shall come in and all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, *there shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob*, Rom. 11. 26. However it is certain that the light of the gospel will spread over all the earth, some way and time or other, Isa. 11. 9. Rev. 11. 15. Therefore, dear brethren, wait patiently 116 (though sometimes the shades of night spread thick around you and you feel their chilling damps) for the glorious time of the latter days which is not very far off. You have many enemies without and within; many serious discouragements to encounter: Oh that pious christians would consider this and be earnest in prayer for the messengers of Christ; especially for those whom they have chosen as their pastors. Farewell dear brethren and fathers; I have no hopes to see but a very few of you with my bodily eyes, till the glorious morning of the resurrection; but I rejoice to think that the spirits of the departed saints shall meet in heaven, and there (by some means unknown to us now) shall, see to their great joy, the glory of the kingdom of Christ on earth.

6. *To the heads and rulers of civil governments.* I feel myself heppy that providence has conducted me into this happy land of liberty, plenty, and I might say of peace till of late. It was my beloved country, long before I had power to come into it, and I may call it so yet. The only disappointment I found in this country, was, that many vices, immoralities, and vain amusements abound, and are too much countenanced; this grieved my heart and

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gave a deep wound to my feelings. I humbly think dear sirs, that you should not slightly overlook the vices of the nation, and that the burning of the theatre at Richmond should have much weight upon your minds. It should induce you to consider the great danger of countenancing vain and sinful amusements, to grieve the hearts of those citizens, who wish to see the United States of America, flourish in virtue and religion, and such citizens are 117 the most valuable ornaments of the country: without those, a country is in danger of ruin. The wisest form of government and the great military preparation, will not defend a country long, if the Almighty God will turn his hand against it, for abusing his temporal favours, for pride, luxury, idleness and attachment to sinful amusements, stageplays, masquerades, balls, puppetshows, horseraces and gambling. And if any of you do not or wish not to allow that these vanities are sinful and provoking to God, bear with me I pray you, while I ask, what good do they do in any country in a national sense? they do not fit any man for honourable employments in life, but rather the contrary. They do not improve the rational powers of mind, but rather impair them. They make no man a better soldier, but rather make him more mercenary, idle and effeminate: for the truth of this I wish to refer you to the history of Greece. The Grecians arose by industry and rigid virtue; they improved in the arts and sciences; they attended to amusements or exercises, useful to strengthen their constitutions and to make them vigorous and hardy in business and war. And they fell by pride, luxury, vices, idleness, and by excessive attachment to theatrical amusements, and there is reason to think that such amusements among them were more useful and decent than those of the present age. Shall I prevail on you to consider the natural evil of these vain amusements, by wasting time and property, and bringing with them a swarm of vices and immoralities, and besides, you know that sometimes they are the occasion of the loss of many useful members of society and of promising youths, by dreadful events, which often happen to theatres, &c 118 as was the case in Richmond by the burning of the theatre. A tender conscience might fear, that this accident, was under the direction of the wise disposer of all events, as in it were consumed many leading characters, which might have been permitted to shew his displeasure at countenancing such sinful diversions. The place was not far from the seat of government; this might have

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been, to warn our rulers to take notice of leading vices that bring calamities and accidents upon the nation; to warn them not to be unconcerned of their duty, to discountenance such vain amusements by law and example. The vices of the present royal family in England, are repeatedly mentioned by many in this country; but we should look farther and observe their sources; likely that one source, and that not the least, is their frequenting of balls, play-houses, masquerades and card-tables, and their great attachment to them. A discerning observer may justly think, that the wicked conduct and numerous crimes, of the great men in Britain, had brought the judgments of God long ago upon their heads, were it not for the great number of pious people that are there, for whose sake these judgments have been averted and the country spared hitherto from general desolation. But yet notwithstanding their vices and wickedness, in the midst of gospel blessings and privileges, have brought them often under many internal calamities, which I am afraid will be the case with this country, except it will repent and reform. Though inconsiderate infidels may count all national judgments to be natural events and misfortunes, without considering that plagues, fires, fevers, famines, wars, and all events 119 and misfortunes, are subject to the controul of the Great Sovereign of the universe. Moreover, dear sir, as I have taken the liberty of testifying against abusing the temporal favours of our gracious benefactor, I humbly beg leave to testify against infidelity, which is so highly provoking to God, especially when found in the enjoyment of abundance of providential favours and religious opportunities. Likely my testimony against this evil may offend some of my readers, for there are many who have the hearts and lives of infidels who do not like the character. But it is a common maxim in this country, and a very good one it is, that every one should be entitled according to his merits; then if we wish not to be counted infidels we should shun their evil ways. I allow that in general, the inhabitants of these United States may be called Christians, because we have so many Christian privileges among us; but as the circumcised Jews were called uncircumcised, on account of their contradictory conduct; so we, on account of our contradictory life as Christians, deserve to be called heathens or infidels. But I am ashamed to think that many heathen countries, by far exceeded many of the inhabitants of this land in devotion and morality; they knew not

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God, but were careful, altho' to offer sacrifices and thanks to their idols for the necessities of life, and for protection and deliverance from danger. But ah! how many are there in this country, who enjoy abundant means of knowing God, and the way to worship him, are yet entirely unconcerned, they do not acknowledge him as the giver of their favours; is not this conduct highly offensive to God? does it not provoke him to pour down his judgments upon us? I acknowledge that you cannot reform the country in this respect, farther than by giving a good example, serving the Lord in your families and in the public Christian worship, but oh that you were so well disposed, as to consider this your duty. Again, a farther and worse degree of infidelity appears by the habit of drinking to excess, cursing and swearing, and profaning the Sabbath of the Lord, attending play—houses, horseraces, and card tables. Likely you may object and say, the laws of the land do not allow these vices; to which I reply, by asking, why do you not put these laws in force against these vices, before it is too late? It shall be too late in some measure, when by not putting them in force, to put a stop to vices, many heavy judgments shall have come on the land, and more such dreadful accidents shall have happened as that in Richmond. O dear sirs, please to consider this; and please to consider besides, what can the laws avail if not reduced to practice, and how can we expect reformation from these vices in the country, while many of your rank and character, being heads and rulers of government, attend such places and practice such vices. Therefore, I humbly tell you in the name of the Lord, reform, reform, reform yourselves, and then we may expect that the country in general, will be reformed by your good example. But on the contrary, if you do not reform, the people will grow bold in wickedness, being encouraged by your bad example. Remember that you are, as public ministers, accountable to him who is the judge of all the earth. Your bright talents and high station will not excuse, but aggravate your crimes. 121 But, alas! I cannot help thinking with a deep sigh, that there are many in the land, and perhaps there are some of you, who will disregard all warnings and good admonitions, because they come from persons who are inclined to religion, and honour the scriptures: this is the worst kind of infidelity, as it opens a wide door, to all kinds of vices. As the word of God, the holy bible shews us the way of salvation, and binds believers to

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live justly, soberly and godly in this present world, we cannot expect much of these virtues in those who do not regard the bible and religion. 'Tis true that the civil government should not punish deists for their unbelief; our wise government is much to be commended in this respect; it gives full liberty of conscience to all to serve God in their own way. I wish not to have these infidels punished by law; but I dread that God will punish that country, in which many of its inhabitants and rulers and officers favour infidelity in heart and conduct. It is not my business in this address to defend the authority of the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion; there are many excellent books and pamphlets in the country on that subject. Among others, I wish to refer you to a book entitled the Evidences of the Christian religion, collected from the writings of the right honourable Joseph Addison, Esq. and another entitled "A view to the Evidences of Christianity," by William Palley, A. M. and Mr. Simpson's Plea for the Christian Religion; but my humble intention at this time, is to warn my fellow citizens of every rank and character, to consider the danger of disregarding the word of God and divine worship. I am not afraid that the word of God will fall; I know it will not. Infinite wisdom and an Almighty arm have defended the scriptures in every age, and will defend them till time shall be no more. But I am afraid that the glory of our country will fall by disregarding the word of God. It might be supposed the Lord would bear with many errors and vices in a nation rising from darkness to light; but if a nation, having had the favour of beginning in the light of the gospel, having her constitution and laws established on the principles of divine revelation, as well as of right reason, and attended with piety and the fear of God, fall away from regarding the oracles of God, religion and prayer, to national pride, human wisdom, self-dependance and boasting in the flesh, is in danger to be visited with heavy judgments. The ever memorable Mr. Elliot used to say, that whenever we would have any great things to be accomplished, the best policy is to work by an engine (prayer) which the world sees nothing of, as the kings Jeshosephat and Hezekia did, and George the 2d. And I have no doubt but that the great father of our country, George Washington in the time of the revolution, worked much with this engine, though not without being active in the use of all lawful outward means, to carry on and defend the glorious cause; which undoubtedly is our duty in all affairs. The Lord

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Jehovah must have his sovereignty acknowledged, and his precepts obeyed, especially in a country favoured with so many privileges and extensive means of knowledge as this country is. It is known that some tyrants were more afraid of the prayers of those who had an interest in heaven, than of the force of arms. It is true that the Lord defends a country sometimes ¹²³ and succeeds their military arms, in answer to the prayers of his church and pious individuals, though the civil and military officers themselves be ungodly men and prayerless; but if so, how much more, if they were godly and prayerful. I hope dear sirs, I shall be excused, for making so free with persons of your high character, as to recommend to you the word of God and prayer, for I am stirred to this from an affectionate desire for the happiness of your souls and the welfare of the country: it will not hinder your being good politicians and courageous defenders of the rights of the country; but it would greatly add to your wisdom and abilities, in fulfilling the important duties of your offices, and it would unite you in your schemes, measures and efforts, for the internal improvement of this extensive country, for defending it against the savages of the woods, and the tyrants of the ocean, and in obtaining that element a free high road for all nations.

As the Most High, who ruleth in the kingdoms of the earth, hath favoured this country, with the foundation and establishment of a government, which should be an example to the world, for justice, and humanity; I am persuaded to believe that he will raise this country to a more perfect national and ecclesiastical glory, than any nation yet has been on earth, and that its extensive bosom will embrace many millions of the distressed inhabitants of the old world, and will be a refuge to those who are groaning under, the yoke of tyrannical powers. He knows how to place states and kingdoms under the guardianship of his holy angels, who carry on their grand affairs invisibly to us, (otherwise their ¹²⁴ appearance would overpower our senses) and all wicked men and devils are subject to their controul; therefore, dear sirs, I pray you hinder not this glorious work to go on, by disregarding the religion of our dear Redeemer.

I hope that I shall be excused for being so long and earnest in my applicatory address, to the ecclesiastical and civil officers of the United States, as it is a matter of great

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importance with me, for the turn of the great scale of reformation in the land, depends much upon these two classes of people, and if the poor mite I have cast into the treasury, will be a blessing to any of them, I deem it a pleasing reward for my unworthy service.

Youth. Oh dear youth; my heart bleeds for you, by observing that the most of you spend your time in vanity, serving the devil, the great enemy of souls. He pretends to be your friend, but he knows better, and Oh that you knew better in time. He knows that he is your enemy; but he conceals his enmity under a cloak of friendship. He pretends (by working inwardly on your minds, and outwardly by his hellish artful servants) to be much concerned for your happiness, while in reality, his whole design is to make you miserable. His pretension to make you happy, is much like a man who offers to manure some fine nursery and defend it from harm, in order that thereby he may have a chance to mar the plants in their growth lest they should bear fruit; and to take away the fence, that every beast of the field, and wild beast of the forest may come in upon the nursery and destroy the young trees root and branch. Remember that by infernal disguise, he persuaded our first parents to disobey the command of God. He envied their happiness, and 125 under pretence of making them happier, he brought them and their posterity into a dreadful state of sin and misery. This old crooked serpent continues to preach his old lies, "ye shall not die." He pretended to be a great friend to our Saviour; he seemed full of compassion. When he could not prevail by his flatteries, he raged and assaulted him with reproach and persecution; but instead of conquering our dear Saviour, he himself was conquered. The Lord Jesus bruised the head of this serpent, according to the gracious promise given our first parents; which promise, was like a bright star in their gloomy sky and dark night of condemnation and a guilty conscience. And now as Jesus Christ is the only refuge, in which the fallen race of Adam may be safe, by faith in him from the wrath to come; this old serpent flatters you and says, there is not much need of such a refuge. If he cannot persuade you that a Saviour is unnecessary, he will use all his artful schemes to keep you from accepting this Saviour in time, by persuading you that it is yet too soon; that you should not be in a hurry to be religious; and throw away a fine prospect of youthful

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pleasures. Jesus Christ the Prince of Light, and the Devil, the Prince of Darkness, do not agree in their testimony. The Lord Jesus, by his word and servants, tells you that now is the acceptable time, and that now is the day of salvation; the Devil, by as many means as he can, tells you, not to day, but some time to come, and that it will be soon enough to look for religion in the time of sickness or old age. And I have no doubt, but that sound reason and conscience may tell you, to which of them you should listen, and L2 126 which of them is most likely to tell the truth. Are you so unhappy as to give credit to the Father of Lies! If you will listen to him, you will never see suitable time to repent and turn to God: with him it is always too soon or too late. Because he wishes to triumph in your destruction; he endeavours to make you careless of your salvation in this world, that you may be miserable in the world to come: for he well knows, that if he once gets you there, there you must stay forever; though he is artful in this likewise, persuading men by many means, that although they must go to hell, yet they will come from there again some time or other, and this to the very same purpose, as I said before, of keeping them careless of their salvation, till too late.

Therefore, dear youth, *to day if you will listen to the voice of Jesus, harden not your hearts*, Heb. 4. 7. *Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near*, Isa. 55.6. But perhaps some of you are ready to say that you did not understand that Satan tempts you and prevails against you as I mentioned. To which I must answer with grief, that is the misery of it, you do not observe the snares and wiles of Satan, and that partly, because of your inconsideration, and your unwillingness to consider. Satan well knows that his service is bad and his wages worse; if you begin to consider, he dreads the consequence; he fears your eyes will be opened to see your bad situation under his dominion. He has many means to darken your understandings in spiritual things, to fill your minds with vain imaginations and to excite your wills to rebel against your maker, by a swarm of sinful and lustful desires. Many ways he has to entice your 127 affections; he knows that your case is very bad, and that there is dreadful misery before you; therefore, he uses all the means he can to hide your danger from you and to drive all thoughts

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of it out of your mind. He has many ways, by vain amusements, to allure your senses, to confound the understanding, to silence the voice of conscience, to take away every serious thought from the mind; in order that the wretched sinner may be rendered unfit for any religious duty, and quite careless and inconsiderate of his danger, in a state of rebellion against God; like an ill wisher, who diverts a man that is in great danger, by telling a great number of old stories full of lies; or by intoxicating him, and this to make him insensible of his danger, until his ruin comes upon him. Many are the schemes of Satan, to divert you, dear youth, in the way of sin, to make you insensible of your danger, in a state of enmity against God. He intoxicates your minds with vain imaginations and sinful desires; with pride, self-conceit, and confidence in the flesh. He pretends to make you happy by brutal and filthy pleasures of sense; like a man who pretends to make a criminal happy by strewing the road to the place of execution with flowers, to divert the criminal and keep him from attending to the affectionate voice of a person sent from his sovereign with conditions of pardon, liberty and large possessions: thus the pretended friend with flowers, keeps the criminal from regarding the true friend, who is willing to redeem his life, and save him from the shame and pain of execution. And so my young friends, Satan strews the broad road that leads to destruction, with all manner of flowers, such as 128 vain and empty curiosities, amusements, carnal and brutal pleasures. By these he allures your senses, and keeps you from attending to the voice of the gospel, or rather the voice of Christ in the gospel. Satan well knows, that you, in the days of youth, are as fond of pleasures as little children are of flowers. There are many wild flowers of a beautiful appearance, but of a very disagreeable smell, and some are poisonous. Now a person void of the sense of smelling and ignorant of the poisonous quality of flowers, might delight more in such flowers, than in roses and lilies. So by the wild and poisonous flowers, vanities and sinful pleasures, Satan keeps many of you, dear youth, from embracing the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies, Christ and his sweet graces. The depravity of human nature is so great, that he has lost the sense of smelling and tasting, with respect to spiritual things; he has no love to things spiritually good; no delight in things suitable to the happiness of his soul, here or hereafter. Nay, it is so far corrupted, as to say of evil, it is good, and of good,

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it is evil; and it appears that this is the case with many of you dear youth. You have more regard to and more pleasure in attending balls and plays than the preaching of the gospel, though it contains glad tidings of salvation to poor sinners. You have more pleasure to look on the cruel spectacle of horseraces and cock-fights, than to think of the holy and religious race of a Christian to heaven through the country of his enemies. You have much more pleasure in gazing on the senseless gestures in puppet shows, than you have in observing and admiring the wonderful works of your Creator, in creation, 129 providence and grace. You think much more of the cards than of the bible; you have much more pleasure in attending card-tables, than you have in private prayer and family worship; you care much more about having your bodies well dressed according to the fashion of the age, than to have your souls adorned with the fine linen white and clean; much more delight in a beautiful body, than in a pure heart; much more pleasure in frolicking, dancing, in foolish and lewd speeches and songs, than in the history of Christ and his apostles, and the sweet songs of Zion; much more careful to have every thing convenient for your bodies, which in a short time must be food for worms, than you are to have your souls fed with the heavenly manna, the bread of life.

O dear youth, will you thus be cheated by the Devil, and deceived by your own evil hearts, to be careless of your immortal souls, and things of eternal importance, until the lamp of your lives is burnt out and your candle quenched in black darkness: the Devil, like the play-actor at Richmond, will tell you there is no danger, though you are in the greatest danger. Again, Satan, the crooked serpent, has another way to cheat you and make you careless and easy in your state of rebellion against your Creator, by telling that God is a merciful God, and by getting you to make some promises of repenting and turning to him sometime before, or on your death bed. But remember dear youth, though the Lord is infinitely merciful, he is also righteous. If you will despise his hand of love and mercy in the day of grace, you must suffer his hand of justice in the day of his wrath against the ungodly. Though 130 Satan tells you now that God is merciful, he does it to encourage you to live in sin. If any of you should turn from sin and seek for mercy, he will tell you so

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much to the contrary, that there is no mercy in God for you. He is well pleased too with your careless promises, of believing and repenting some time to come, for by those means you shall be unconcerned about salvation, till you are sufficiently hardened to go on in the way of sin, till you are snatched from the stage of time to eternity. I remember of a young man, who followed a very ungodly life and rejected the admonitions of his pious parents and godly friends, and used to give them this presumptuous answer, I will do well by saying a few words on my death bed, "Lord be merciful." But alas, this wretched creature did not die upon a bed; but by crossing a bridge, in his mad career he spurred his horse, which leaped over the bridge into the river, and the young man was drowned in a few minutes, and his last words of repentance were, "Devil take all." Perhaps some of you are so hardened as to laugh at this account, but remember that you will not laugh, when you see him in torments, and yourselves being partakers with him of the same dreadful wages of sin. Wherefore dear youth, let me entreat you again to remember "that now is the acceptable time, that now is the day of salvation," 2 Cor. 6. 2. The time of sickness is not an easy time of seeking salvation; I remember of a young man upon his death bed, when I asked him how it was with him, he answered praising God, that he had the favour of choosing Christ to be his saviour in time of health, as his pain was so great at that time, that seldom 131 he could compose his mind so much as to think of the concerns of his soul. Dear youth, it may be that the number of your days upon earth, are almost up; look around, a great many younger than you, have been cut off by the king of terrors from the land of the living. Turn your eyes once more to the theatre at Richmond, and to many other theatres and puppet-show rooms, where a great number of blooming youth among others, have been snatched away suddenly, to an endless eternity. You may see that play-houses are very profitable to the prince of darkness, to answer his purpose of alluring the senses of mankind from regarding religion when alive, and are often the instruments of death, to hurry thousands into another world, before they have time to consider the solemn change. Therefore dear youth, remember your creator in the days of your youth; be not so cruel to yourselves and ungrateful to your Maker, as to lay aside a due sense of his goodness, the value of your souls and all thoughts of religion, till old age. Is it reasonable to expect,

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that the Lord will regard you, after spending all your days in the service of Satan? Is it after you have worn yourselves out in the service of Satan and when you are able to do no more for him, you intend to offer yourselves to God? Oh consider how unreasonable and mad are these notions. And what can be more reasonable and profitable than to serve your Maker in your best days? Who is worthy of the service of your beautiful bodies, your active members, strong and lively senses, precious and immortal souls, but your creator, preserver, and bountiful benefactor? Can you, dear youth, refuse to listen to all the voices, 132 which call on you to forsake your evil ways and turn to the Lord? Especially, will you refuse to listen to the invitation of the Lord Jesus, the Prince of Glory; his voice in all other voices calls on you saying, *all things are ready, come to the marriage*; and will you refuse your own salvation? You pretend to pursue after happiness and pleasure; but oh dear youth, you have lost the way; you are quite mistaken with respect to the grounds and ingredients of happiness. Nothing short of true religion can make you truly happy; all the ways of religion, *are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the beginning of that wisdom is the fear of the Lord. That wisdom teaches us to choose and delight in things suitable to the large desires of our souls; nothing in this world can satisfy the mind and heart of men. None but the Lord who made us, can fill mind with constant and satisfactory pleasure. The wisest of men, after trying all the pleasures of sense, was obliged to exclaim, *vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit*, Eccl. 1. 1. 18. When a man possesses *godliness*, which *is profitable to all things*, 1 Tim. 6. 6. he may follow his calling and attend to his occupation with a view to the glory of God, and with an eye of faith look forward to the *rest that remains to the people of God*, Heb. 4. 9. I am confident dear youth, that some of you have an experience of the kingdom of God within you, which is *righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 14. 17. then flee from youthful lusts; be faithful till the end, and you shall receive a crown of life. I have entreated you in the words of Solomon, the wisest of men, to remember 133 your Creator in the days of your youth. If any of you, after all the warnings, admonitions, and instructions you have had from all quarters, by many different means, from time to time, are yet hardened and bent to pursue the ways of sin,

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vanity and youthful lusts; I entreat you again to remember the words of the same wise man, or rather the words of God by him, "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes. But know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment, Eccl. 11. 9. You will bring evil upon your flesh and sorrow upon your souls, and dreadful shall be the account you must give at the last day.

END. M

ERRATA.

Page 39, last line, for *possessing*, read *professing*. 58, line 25th, for *Hut*, read *Hus*. 98, line 2d, for *also*, read *ago*

HYMNS.

AN INVITATION TO CHRIST.

1 O! Sinners be awakened To see your dreadful state, Repent and be converted Before it is too late. Turn to the Lord by praying, And daily search his word, And never rest contented Till you have found the Lord.

2 By faith, and hope, and patient, In Christ we do rejoice, And Jesus and his people Forever are our choice. In peace and consolation We now are going on, The pleasant way to Canaan, Where the Lord Jesu's gone.

3 Sinners, why stand you idle, While we march along? Has conscience never told you That you were going wrong; 136 Down the broad road to darkness To bear an endless curse, Forsake your ways of sinning And come along with us.

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4 But if you will refuse it, We bid you all farewell, We're on the road to Canaan, And you the road to hell. We're sorry for to leave you, We'd rather you would go, Come try a bleeding Saviour And feel salvation flow.

FUNERAL.

1 A Solemn march we make, Towards the silent grave, A lodging all must quickly take, And carnal pleasures leave.

2 O what a striking scene, In this cold grave appears, A mortal turn'd to dust again, Quite spun out all his years.

3 And we who now attend, Must soon resign our breath, God will the solemn summons send, By dreadful ghastly death.

4 If I the next should be, That crumble with the dust; My soul—what will become of thee? Hast thou a lot with Christ?

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5 While I remain on earth, My moments swiftly glide, Death will not spare my fancied worth, Founded alone in pride.

6 Now let me home return, And strive my soul to save; Lest I in hell should ever burn, And too late thy mercy crave,

7 Jesus, despised friend, I'll slight thy love no more; Dear saviour now thy spirit send, Which I so griev'd before.

8 Then I'll prepare to meet, My Jesus at his bar, Forever worship at his feet, And sing his praises there.

DAY OF JUDGMENT.

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1 Day of judgment, day of wonders, Hark! the trumpet's awful sound; Louder than a thousand thunders, hakes the vast creation round, How the summons will the sinner's heart confound.

2 See the Judge our nature wearing, Cloth'd in majesty divine; You who long for his appearing, Then shall say this God is mine, Gracious Saviour own me in that day for thine.

M2

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3 At his call the dead awaken, Rise to life from earth and sea; All the pow'rs of nature shaken, By his look prepar'd to flee, Careless sinner, what will then become of thee.

4 Satan, who now tries to please you, Lest you timely warning take; In that awful day will seize you, Plunge you in the burning lake, Think poor sinner, thy eternal all's at stake.

5 But to those who have confessed, Lov'd and serv'd the Lord below; He will say, "come near ye blessed, See the kingdom I bestow, You forever shall my We and glory know."

THE AWAKENED SINNER.

1 Awak'd by Sinai's awful sound My soul in guilt and thrall was found, And knew not where to go; O'erwhelm'd in sin, with anguish slain; The sinner must be born again, Or sink in endless woe.

Amaz'd I stood but could not tell Which way to shun the gates of hell, For death and hell draw near; I strove indeed but strove in vain; The sinner must be born again, Still sodded in my ear.

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3 When to the law I trembling fled, It pour'd its curses on my head; I no relief could find
— This fearful truth increas'd my pain, The sinner must be born again, O'erwhelm'd my
tortur'd mind.

4 Again did Sinai's thunder roll, And guilt lay heavy on my soul; A vast unwieldy load: Alas!
I read and saw it plain, The sinner must be born again, Or drink the wrath of God.

5 The saints I heard with rapture tell, How Jesus conquer'd death and hell, And broke the
fowler's snare; Yet when I found this truth remain, The sinner must be born again, I sunk in
deep despair.

6 But while I thus in anguish lay Jesus of Nazareth pass'd that way, And felt his pity move:
The sinner by his justice slain, Now by his grace is born again, And sings redeeming love!

7 To heav'n the joyful tidings flew, The angels tune their harps anew; And loftier notes did
raise; All hail the lamb that once was slain! Unnumber'd millions born again, Shall shout
thine endless praise.

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GENERAL WARNING.

1 See how the nations rage together, A seeking of each other's blood; See how the
scriptures are fulfilling; Sinners awake and turn to God.

2 We read that wars and great commotions, Shall come before that dreadful day; O
sinners quit your sinful courses, And trifle not your time away.

3 Ye ministers that wait on preaching, Ye teachers and exhorters too; Awake, behold your
harvest's waiting, Arise, for there's no rest for you.

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4 O think upon the strict commandment, That God has on his teachers laid; The sinners blood that dies unwarned, Shall fall upon the shepherd's head.

5 Arise, dear brethren, let us be doing, Behold the nations in distress; O Lord of hosts forbid their ruin Before their day of grace is past.

6 To see the land lie in confusion, Looks dreadful to the mortal eye, But O! dear sinners, that is nothing To when the day of doom draws nigh.

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FUNERAL.

1 Hark from the tombs a doleful sound, My ears attend the cry; "Ye living men come view the ground, Where you must shortly lie.

2 Princes this clay must be your bed, In spite of all your towers; The tall, the wise, the rev'rend head Must lie as low as ours."

3 Great God! is this our certain doom; And are we still secure! Still walking downwards to the tomb, And yet prepare no more!

4 Grant us the pow'rs of quick'ning grace, To fit our souls to fly; Then when we drop this dying flesh, We'll rise above the sky.

AT THE FUNERAL OF A YOUNG PERSON.

1 When blooming youth is snatch'd away By death's resistless hand, Our hearts the mournful tribute pay Which pity must demand.

2 While pity prompts the rising sigh, O may this truth, imprest With awful power—"I too must die!" Sink deep in every breast.

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3 Let this vain world engage no more: Behold the gaping tomb! It bids us seize the present hour, To-morrow death may come.

4 The voice of this alarming scene, May every heart obey; Nor be the heavenly warning vain. Which calls to watch and pray.

5 O let us fly, to Jesus fly, Whose powerful arm can save; Then shall our hopes ascend on high, And triumph o'er the grave.

6 Great God, thy sovereign grace impart, With cleansing, healing power; This only can prepare the heart For death's tremendous hour.

“ Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction. ” Psal. cxix. 92.

1 God and his law are my delight, My glory and my song; My sure support by day and night, The pleasure of my tongue.

2 When guilt pursues my troubled breast, His word I will receive; He tells me where my faith must rest, And helps me to believe.

3 When darkness overspreads my mind, His word supports me still: 143 I'm there convinc'd that God is kind, Though I no comfort feel.

4 When sore temptations vex my soul, I think upon his word; Some promise then my fears controul, And leads me to the Lord.

5 When for my sins my heart is broke, And tears my grief disclose, Thy word directs me to that rock Whence peace and pardon flows.

6 Are my afflictions sharp and long? Does pain extreme ensue? God's word I trust his arm is strong, His goodness bears me through.

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7 Glory to thee thou God of love, For favours so divine; Who taught my thoughts to soar above And made these blessings mine.

8 Had not thy word been my relief, Had not thy truth sustain'd, I must have perish'd in my grief, No other help remain'd.

JOY IN GOD.

1 From thee my God my joys shall rise And run eternal rounds, Beyond the limits of the skies, And all created bounds,

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2 The holy triumph of my soul Shall death itself out-brave; Leave dull mortality behind, And fly beyond the grave.

3 There, where my blessed Jesus reigns, In Heaven's unmeasur'd space; I'll 'njoy a long eternity, In pleasure and in praise.

4 Millions of years my wond'ring eyes Shall o'er thy beauties rove; In endless ages I'll adore, The glories of thy love.

5 Sweet Jesus ev'ry smile of thine Shall fresh endearments bring, And thousand tastes of new delight, From all thy graces spring.

6 Haste, my beloved, fetch my soul, Up to thy blest abode: Fly, for my spirit longs to see My Saviour and my God.